

GRIT

Story
Section



A New and
Exciting First-Run
Novel

RECKLESS LADY

By VERA BROWN

Opens in the Story Section
— Today —

It's the Story of an Ultra-Rich
Playgirl who Flaunted All
Laws Until She Was
Spanked by a
Judge

August 8, 1937

RECKLESS, LADY

by Vera Brown

So Real in Emotion You'll Live Every Minute of It! So Rich in Romance You'll Love Every Paragraph of It! Surprise Follows Surprise in This Suspenseful and Unusual Story ... About a Girl, Born With a Golden Spoon Between Her Lips, Who Trials to Burn the Candle at Both Ends.

CHAPTER I

"LADY, you can't get in here!"

The police officer of the large girth and perspiring face planted firmly in front of the courtroom door of Mott Street Traffic Court was finally losing his patience.

For an hour he had been fighting this irate, determined and ever-increasing band of women.

"Certainly I'm going to get in!" shrilled the woman who was pushed against him so closely by the crowd that the feather in her hat kept getting into his left eye.

"My husband is important in Ward 13; you'll hear about this!" she continued. The crowd surged forward as somebody inside the courtroom tried to open the doors just a crack.

"Get back there!" yelled the police officer as the irate one was pushed against him so hard he grunted.

"Then let us in!" called one of the women further back in the crowd.

Cowley raised his voice. "I tell you, ladies, there ain't any room. People inside can't get out and nobody outside can get in. I can't get in myself, and this is my courtroom!"

His voice was almost plaintive, for Officer Crowley was terrified of women in the mass. And em masse were they this morning before him, buffeting him about.

"That's the trouble with women—they've got no respect for the law," he mused as he pushed.

If there was strife and discontent outside, inside the courtroom more crowds leaned forward eagerly. It wasn't every day New York had a chance to see one of the richest girls in the world in traffic court.

Not an available inch was left back of the railing. Men had climbed upon the window ledges, the better to see. Helpless officers kept giving commands which nobody noticed.

Inside the railing attorneys, court officials, newspaper men and women and photographers milled about, angling for better positions.

Suddenly there was a sharp report. The crowd gasped. Officers instinctively reached for their hip pockets. The crowd surged up, in a panic.

"Stay where you are!" an officer hollered. Then laughter began to ripple over the crowd. A photographer had dropped a flash-light bulb and it lay now in a thousand tiny pieces on the terrace floor. Police men fidgeted, red-faced.

"They say this Karen Mallory is awfully pretty," a woman near the



Stoddard's Face Was a White Mask, as He Sentenced Karen to Jail

front row of spectators said. "Who couldn't be with all that money?" retorted the girl crowded beside her.

"How much longer?" demanded Galloway, of the Chronicle.

"It's almost noon.

Stoddard has no respect for deadlines!"

Then suddenly there was ac-tion- over by the door to the left of the judge's chambers.

"That's her." The whispering ran over the crowd in a low murmur.

"There she is, between the two cops!"

And Karen Mallory walked calmly into the courtroom, did not seem to notice the flashing of bulbs as the cameras and workmen did. Only the sound of cameras being released broke the sudden stillness.

Karen Mallory, seated beside her attorney, was lost to the crowd for the moment.

The murmur rose again.

"She's not dressed so swell," a disappointed woman remarked at seeing her. She'd fought for this vantage place in the crowded room, and the richest girl in the world had walked into court in a simple tweed suit.

"She's got class, and probably that suit cost a lot," said another more discerning woman, and she was quite right.

Just at that moment Judge Richard Stoddard, youngest and handsomest of New York traffic judges, came out of his office, mounted the bench.

The buzz from the spectators rose high.

"I insist on having order here or I'll order the court cleared," Stoddard's crisp voice quieted the voices.

like turning the dial of a radio from station to station. Then Judge Stoddard, consulting a pile of papers

"You have heard the officer's testimony. What have you to say?" Stoddard looked directly down at Karen.

"Nothing, Your Honor," she answered. James Lawton, the Mallory personal attorney, tried to interpose.

"Keep still, Jim!" Karen said in a low voice. "I'll handle this."

Lawton was obviously flustered. Like Officer Crowley, he found women hard to manage, and there was a gleam in Karen's eye he did not like.

"Conceited, too good-looking!" was the thought which ran through Karen's mind as her eyes met the judge's challengingly.

"Miss Mallory, do I understand that you plead guilty to this charge?"

"Yes, I am."

"Karen!" Lawton pulled at her sleeve frantically. "Keep still!"

But nothing had ever stopped Karen Mallory in the 21 years of her life if she had once decided to do something. Lawton tried to interrupt, but the judge stopped him.

"Go on, Miss Mallory."

"I resent all this unfair and undignified court procedure very much," she began, gesturing toward the reporters. Her voice, clear and sweet, carried to the utmost recess of the packed courtroom. "I resent doubly, just because I am a Mallory, that this minor traffic violation is made the occasion for a general holiday for everybody."

Karen's brown eyes blazed with contempt. The silence as she spoke was so great that the breathing of the crowd, the scratch of the reporters' pencils were suddenly loud and strange.

Stoddard's face was a white mask, his eyes never left Karen as she spoke.

"This show may be useful politically since election is near, but I believe it infringes on the rights of myself as an individual. I resent being deprived of my rights!"

Karen's voice ceased. Stoddard did not move. He looked down at the papers before him, and his jaw showed a clear white line. He had learned self-control in a hard school. If he was angry, perturbed, when he finally spoke his voice did not show it.

"Is that all you wish to say, Miss Mallory?"

"That is all."

Lawton was mopping his face. He tried to speak to Karen, but she shook her head impatiently.

"Fifty dollars' fine. Five days. Driver's license revoked."

Stoddard pronounced the sentence causally but with sufficient clearness so that everybody could hear "Next case!" He added that crisply, still conscious of Karen, the defiant tilt of her lovely head.

Then pandemonium broke loose. Reporters rushed for telephones, others made a dive for Karen.

Lawton and two officers grabbed her by the arms, and there began a struggle to reach the door. Court officers tried to get order, but for a couple of minutes that was hopeless. Finally, however, the officers won. Slowly but firmly they fought their way to the back door of the courtroom, the girl between them. Two seconds and Karen had disappeared into the back hallway, pursued by newspaper and camera men.

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Stoddard, without lifting his head, repeated his order: "Call the next case!" Outside in the hallway, waiting for the elevator, Lawton was moaning helplessly: "Karen, you little fool! It was all set! You were to have another chance! You've gone crazy! What in the devil can I tell your father?"

Karen smiled coldly at Lawton, did not seem to hear him.

"I said all I have to say in court!" she told the reporters.

"I'll say she did!" murmured somebody on the edge of the crowd.

"I'll appeal the case, of course," Lawton kept repeating in a kind of helpless way.

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" Karen was equally firm.

"It is worth five days to tell a judge what you think of him!" And she said that loud enough for everybody to hear. Karen was still blazing with anger.

The elevator came, and newspaper people crowded on with officers and their "prisoner." "Miss Mallory has nothing more to say," Lawton announced in loud tones.

"What about her big birthday party scheduled the day after tomorrow?" somebody called above the crowd.

"We can't discuss that now."

The car had reached the basement. A police officer was unlocking the door of the bullpen. Suddenly Karen Mallory, who never did anything she did not want to, found herself behind bars.

"Are you going to take her in the police patrol?" a reporter asked the police officer.

"What the devil do you think we'd take her in?" demanded a cop. A limousine? Say, she's no better than anybody else when she gets in here!"

Karen was still so furious she did not trust herself. Walking as far as she could, she turned her back on the crowd peering in through the bars at her.

Then, with a completely defiant gesture, she opened her handbag, took out her compact and powdered her nose with expert care.

A girl convicted of a drunken driving charge sat on a wooden bench watching. "Well, girlie, you don't seem to mind this. Lord, have I got a hangover!"

Karen, knowing the watchers were pop-eyed, smiled.

"What'd you get?"

"Get?"

"How long you're up for?"

"Oh, five days I think."

"You're lucky; that old sore-head upstairs gave me ten days. He musta got

up the wrong side of the bed this morning!"

The girl eyed the crowds and Karen speculatively. "You in for drunk driving too?"

"No, just speeding."

"Swell country this is getting to be when a lady goes to jail just like that for nothing!"

Then Karen heard Ping Farrington calling to her. Ping was her fiance. "Karen, come here," young Farrington demanded. Gingerly Karen went to the bars and tried to hide behind Ping.

"Darling, what is this all about? Where's Lawton?"

Ping clutched Karen's hands through

the bars, and Karen's beautiful engagement ring which Ping had given her three weeks before cut into her finger.

"Now, honey, I'll get you out of this. I know Stoddard. I'll fix everything. I'm going right up there now and see him."

"You'll do nothing of the sort!"

"You can't stay in here."

"Never mind about that—"

"Your mother will be frantic. Wait until your father hears about this!"

"Thank goodness he isn't in town!"

"There's such a thing as radio and they'll burn up the air to get him. You be a good girl and I'll have you out of here in 15 minutes!"

Ping gave her hands a squeeze, and Karen ducked to the back of the cell again.

CHAPTER II

IN STODDARD'S courtroom upstair the crowds had steeped away. The excitement was over. They stood outside hoping to catch a glimpse of the girl as she went on her way to jail.

Farrington, fumbling for his card, asked one

"She is my fiancee, you know," he continued.

"No, I didn't know—" Oddly enough, Stoddard felt a resentment against this affable young man.

"Of course, she can't stay in jail and I wondered just what you suggest I do."

Stoddard went to his desk and pulled out a sheaf of train tickets. "Here they are," he said with a wry smile. "There's enough to play a game of bridge with. Last week I sent up a woman for five days who did not have as many violations charged up against her as Miss Mallory." He paused.

"But you know, Mallory is pretty powerful," Ping warned. "It would be valuable to have his aid; there's a new campaign coming along in a little while, and this is a nice job for a young chap like you—"

Stoddard was white.

"I realize all that, but there is nothing I can do."

Farrington was angry. "It's so silly; we'll see she doesn't drive for a while.



*"I Suppose You're Karen Mallory?"
The Girl's Eyes Glittered, and
Her Hands Were Shaking*

But why that child should be sent into an awful jail! It's unthinkable!"

"Probably, but 'that child' is just that, spoiled. I had to do what I did."

Something in the judge's eye told Ping he had gone too far. He changed his method of attack.

"But Karen's a darling, really, and then there's that big birthday party for her. A thousand people invited and it will have to be called off. Lots of publicity for you, I suppose."

"That is what Miss Mallory insisted."

"What do you mean?"

"Only that she told me in open court just how much contempt she had for me. It was all I could do to keep from citing her. But I couldn't be drawn into a fight with a woman—certainly not a beautiful one. I'm not that foolish. I know my limitations."

"You don't mean Karen got up on her

of the officers if the judge could see him for a moment. Stoddard, still on the bench, looked at Farrington's card, glanced toward him, and shortly joined Farrington in his private office.

"Do you remember, judge, I think we were in Columbia together? At least I tried my luck at law for a term; we were in 'Negotiable Instruments' together. Right there was where I gave up the idea of law."

"Of course," Stoddard held out his hand. "What can I do for you?"

"I wanted to talk to you about Miss Mallory," Ping began.

"Yes," the judge, instantly watchful, eyed Ping.

high horse in court, do you, judge?" "Something like that. However, I'd have had to sentence her anyway, so that does not matter. It was just—rather amusing."

"She didn't mean it. I'll make her apologize, in open court, and then she can go free."

"I'm afraid it is not as simple as that, Farrington. By the way, did she send you?"

"No, she didn't want me to come."

"If I judge the young lady rightly, that is no surprise to me. I'm sorry, Farrington, but there is nothing I can do for you in this case. Maybe next time—." And so ended the interview.

Ping rushed back downstairs to the bullpen. He was too late. Karen had gone. She had gone in a police patrol to jail, lovely Karen Mallory, who had had more proposals of marriage than any other young woman on Manhattan or Long Island for that matter.

For years Karen was to remember that ride to the jail. With her went Violet, the girl who had been driving drunk and two other women who were to serve two-day sentences for traffic violations.

Violet kept a steady moaning all the way. "It's my head, it feels like a whole marimba band! Wonder if they'll let me have a drink in jail?"

The officer riding at the door, foot up on the opposite seat, said he thought not.

Behind them, Karen could see a string of taxis carrying newspapermen and photographers to the jail. "They're still after me," Karen thought, with a smile.

"Say, officer, who's this dame that everybody's getting so excited about her?" demanded one of the women.

"Ask her," said the officer.

"All right, what's your name?" The woman leaned toward Karen, who sat opposite her.

"Karen Mallory."

"What! Not that girl that's always getting into the newspapers?" The woman just gasped. Karen did not answer. "We're in swell company!" "right," Violet remarked. "Is it true your dad has all the money in the world?"

Karen smiled at Violet. She was refreshing at least! Maybe this might be fun. Only five days, and to the devil with the party! They could put it off.

"What's it like in jail?" Karen asked.

"You'll know in a minute," said the officer as the patrol drew up at the receiving door. "Come on, girls, and no fighting! Out with you."

Together the three "tramped" inside the big gray pile. Under the high lights of the registration room they faced a man in a steel mesh cage.

But where Karen was there was to be no peace. The cameramen had arrived, arrived in time to see Karen pass over to the officer her gorgeous sapphire engagement ring, her watch, and her money.

"Can't I keep some of that?" Karen asked as she counted out the bills from her purse.

"The matron will let you have some as you need it; so now keep moving."

Shortly Karen Mallory was standing outside the shower room in a checked

gingham dress. Her blond beauty in that plain garb, with the gray-painted walls as background, was startling.

The matron smiled at her. "This way, Miss Mallory, come along."

"Shall I be in a cell alone?"

"I'm afraid not; we're pretty crowded."

"May Violet be with me then?"

"Violet?"

"This girl," said Karen, pointing to her friend of the bullpen.

"That can be arranged."

The twist of a dial and the cell door opened. Karen and Violet were at the end of their journey.

Karen, looking around the gray walls, felt a sudden desperation. Her anger had cooled and she felt a desperate desire to cry. As she walked over to her bunk and sat down, she saw that in that cell block were two other girls. They were eying her with deep interest. Even here in jail, the Mallory name was something to conjure with, it appeared. Karen could not realize the grapevine system of news which travels through a jail like quicksilver, travels for those who are so eager for news, any news to break the monotony, to help the time pass more quickly.

"I'm hungry," Karen suddenly remembered. She'd had only coffee for breakfast, for Lawton had come for her to hurry her to court.

Karen, disconsolate, wondered about Lawton and her mother.

"Oh, my head!" Violet interposed and she lay down on the gray blanket, which covered her bunk. "If I live through today, maybe I'll be all right."

"Try to sleep," Karen suggested.

"I would if they'd keep those hammers quiet."

"Miss Mallory, your attorney has ordered your meals sent in from Pierre's. He says you may want some lunch."

Karen saw the two strange girls straighten up.

"Yes." She came over to Miss Kilroy and spoke in a low tone. "May I order something for the other girls in my cell?"

"No, but if you put in a large order and there is enough for them, nobody can object," the matron said with a smile.

"Fine." Karen turned. "What do you girls want to eat?" They were all silent. "The treat's on me," Karen said, as she noted the hesitation.

"Could we have anything we want?" one of them asked.

"Of course."

"I'm from down South, and would like fried chicken!" she said.

"Right. Violet, what do you want?"

"Never speak to me of food again as long as I live!" came a muffled voice from her bunk.

"Black coffee for you, and you could drink some tomato juice, couldn't you?"

So Karen gave the order. "And tell them to hurry it up."

Hardly had the order been given when the matron came back to get Karen for her first visitor.

"It's your attorney," said Miss Kilroy.

Karen was led into the matron's small office off an interviewing room.

"Karen." It was Ping who met her at the door, took her in his arms and kissed her.

Lawton was pacing up and down the cell. "What a day!" he groaned. "Have you got anything to eat?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Kilroy has sent for something for me." Then to Ping, "Darling, I'm truly sorry. I didn't realize what a mess I'd make of everything!"

"Miss is right! Here's some radios from your dad. He's wild. His ship will dock in the morning. We've got to get you out before then."

"What about Mother?"

"You can imagine. She's frantic. She says we've got to get you out before the party."

"Cancel the thing. I didn't want it anyway!"

"How can we? Everything's arranged, and lots of people are coming up from out of town for it!"

"Well, put it off for a couple of days, we'll have a 'coming-out party' for me!"

"Karen, how can you! Think of your mother and dad! I think you're enjoying this."

"Certainly I am!"

"You really hate it!" Ping dropped a kiss on the top of her honey-colored hair. "Karen, you're difficult!"

"Sorry? Want to back out?"

"I'd like to spank you! That's what!"

"I dare you!"

"Will you two keep still? I've got to talk to Karen." Lawton, shocked at seeing Karen in prison garb and now that the first blow was over, became furiously angry with her. Probably this whole thing would cost him his close personal association with Mallory. That meant cutting off the major part of his income. And Lawton had an expensive family.

"Karen, if you'll apologize to the judge I think he'll let you out by tomorrow morning. He's served his purpose—"

"That's just the point, my dear, darling Jim! Of course, he's served his purpose."

Her impudent little nose, her laughing eyes, were incongruous in this place. That's just what I'm complaining about. He's a silly stuffed shirt that thought he'd get a lot of publicity by sending me to jail. Well, I'm going to see be gets it!"

"Karen!" Lawton pleaded, almost on his knees. "Stoddard is a great guy. He'd have given you a break if you'd behaved in court! You know you had something coming. I almost went to jail myself the last time you got into trouble! Just trying to fix the thing up."

"Now, darling!" Ping was becoming nervous. Karen was carrying the whole thing too far. So they quarreled, Karen with flippancy, Lawton with rising anger. Finally he gave up.

"Karen, I'm going away. Maybe a night in this place will teach you some sense."

"How can you leave her here, Jim?" Ping demanded. "Lord, even the smell

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IT'S a strange person who will refuse an easy way to earn extra dollars. Your earnings may be small—you may need extra money. The Business-by-Mail Classified columns of Grit will put you in touch with excellent opportunities. Be sure to read them this week.

Goodby, Little Bandit

Ransom and Romance In a Mexican Desperado's Hideout

IT WAS high noon and Panchito was howling. Swung aloft in his little hammock he punched the air and wailed for his mother. The demands were few. But nobody came. A faint whiff of jasmine perfume and the already dead echoes of a mocking laugh and escaping high heels were all that remained of his mother. Except for a few doves grazing outside the door, the weeping baby was the only living creature on that vast, desolate mountain.

El Angel, Pancho's father, was miles away in Mexico City for the Mexican-bound train. He was an elegant figure, Pancho's father, all in white. White suede charro costume adorned with silver, white booted and white felt hat covered with a little silver star embroidered high on the crown. It was a good angel people whispered in awe, who protected him on his raids.

Not far to the north of the secluded spot where El Angel waited for it, the train ploughed around the winding track through the mountains. It was making up lost time and it rocked from side to side with such force that the small blood vessels in his eye were torn. The combined dinner and observation car could scarcely keep her balance. And Craig, the only other American passenger, was sick as she struggled with the heavy door to the car, then rose and opened it for her.

"Thank you," she said, raising large violet eyes toward him. "I was just going to have a cup of tea together." "Why, yes," he said, surprised. "You was I."

Seated opposite her, at the table, he confirmed his own first opinion of her, as she had been described to him when she got on the train in San Antonio last night. She was the most artifical, the most fragile, the most helpless-looking creature he had ever seen.

As she was distinctly and applied himself to the menu, "Does anything on here look good to you?" he asked. "All of it," she sighed. "It's a sharp intake of breath. "It's El Angel. The worst rogue in this part of Mexico." "He walks like Lawrence Tibbett," observed Craig, unimpressed.

"Don't look at me like that or two," snarled Andrew uneasily, "but there's a guard right back of you."

"Sneaky, aren't they?" replied the woman. "I think the one behind you was the best he's had." "I don't think he'll like it if you jump." He looks mean."

"Do you live in Mexico?" "Not at present, but I used to. I'm on my way now to take on a new job."

"I am. I am dancing in a cafe in Mexico City. I don't think I'll like it if you jump."

"Oh, no," he laughed. "It's in South America. Peru to be specific. But my

fanee lives in Mexico City. We are to be married day after tomorrow."

"Oh." She turned away from him and looked at the heavily timbered mountains. The sun lay lightly on her hair and Andrew could not take his eyes away.

"What a misfit she would be in a mining camp," Andrew thought, and then he remembered Evelyn with tardy loyalty.

EVELYN JARVIS! Her father had owned the first mine he had ever worked in, green from the Texas School of Mines. But from the first Andrew had determined to win her, clearing his desk swiftly with the same brilliant energy for action that had characterized every move he had so far made. Evelyn had everything—money, background, influence, looks. She would make an ideal wife for a man who expected to be a mine owner. To get to the top in this mining game. If at times, having won her, she seemed to him a little formal, a little withdrawn, lacking in some dreamed-of, imagined quality, he had been patient.

Even the eerie, insistent whistling of the train at that moment failed to have any significance for the two Americans so completely absorbed in each other.

"I wonder what the train is doing for," said Andrew impatiently. "There isn't a station for miles."

"Maybe there's a cow on the track." The train was slowing down, came to a stop. Andrew opened the window and looked out.

"What is it? Can you see?" "Yes. The track curves ahead here. There's a cow and there's a horse on the track, but a horse." Taking his siesta, no doubt. If we wait for it to move—"

"He's face stiffened. Bandits!" He drew in his head with a jerk. "Pedro" called. Sit back. Not too close to the window."

They came, dozens of them, it seemed, shooting wildly, waving their sombreros, yelling like fiends. Most of them were on horseback. Pistols were pointed against the train.

Then one of them, picturesque in white, disengaged himself from the mob, leaped from his horse, called out something in the engine.

"Goodby, Andrew with a sharp intake of breath. "It's El Angel. The worst rogue in this part of Mexico."

"He walks like Lawrence Tibbett," observed Craig, unimpressed.

"Don't look at me like that or two," snarled Andrew uneasily, "but there's a guard right back of you."

"Sneaky, aren't they?" replied the woman. "I think the one behind you was the best he's had."

"Never necessarily." Trying to sound comforting and casual, Andrew's voice sounded only hollow. "I could run the engine, I think, if I had to. I've been



"These Two Sins," Muttered El Angel Angry, "Fighting Over the Senorita!"

marked, staring back at him out of small, lustreless eyes.

Unexpectedly the guard snarled, doffed his sombrero.

"Vidro Jimenes, a la orden de usted, Senorita," he murmured.

"He just introduced himself," said Andrew, and turned again to the man behind his own chair.

"Pedro!" snarled the guard, and took a step toward him.

"I'd rather look out the window," said Lily, but as she looked out there was a sharp crack and her face went white.

"He shot the engineer!" she cried. "I shot the engineer!" she added. A second she regained her color, however, and ventured a stiff smile.

"I'd had to shoot somebody," she said, "why couldn't it have been the conductor? Now we're stuck."

Andrew turned in spite of himself, looked into a face swarthy and sullen.

He had been the conductor. Andrew's voice sounded only hollow. "I could run the engine, I think, if I had to. I've been



plumber, dishwasher, farm hand, worked in a grocery store, railroad yards, starch factory...."

He had never seen Evelyn, somehow, as she had seen him. None of it had seemed funny before. Strange that it should seem so now with a bandit's gun almost touching his shoulder blades.

With a theatrical flourish, El Angel stepped to the center, removed his hat, bowed elegantly.

"Senorita, señor, buenas tardes!" He scrutinized his two prisoners with care and interest and told them they had nothing to fear.

"I am only taking you for ransom," he explained to Andrew. "Fifteen thousand pesos each. You have rich friends."

"I'm not going to pay," replied Andrew with spirit when Andrew interpreted for her.

"Never mind. I'll write to Evelyn. She can raise 30,000 as easily as 15,000."

Lily flushed and bit her lip, but and nothing, and watched in silence as Andrew wrote the note in Spanish at the

bottom of his dictation.

"Bien!" El Angel cried. "Now it's all settled."

He handed the note to Ysidro, the guard behind Lily, with a rapid, well-tempered, determined movement, and then Ysidro mounted his horse and rode away.

"Well," said Lily with resignation, "I guess that means we're the guests of this angel fellow until we're rescued."

Things moved with a fascination that Andrew had not expected. El Angel's car was unoccupied from the rest of the train and El Angel himself climbed into the driver's seat and started it off. With the track marking almost a hairpin curve at the point where it turned off for the marooned Americans to watch the engine and the other car started to move, as if to follow them, but before it had gained much speed El Angel stopped it, stepped out of the car, dashed off his white suit and waved his hat as the train with its screeching, rattling passengers disappeared again into the bend.

"I didn't know a train could run with an engineer," said Lily.

"But what you like, then?" Her gravity vanished.

"I like gravy and beans," she said, twinkling. "And I like to peel boiled beans. And I like babies. Every time I get my hands on a baby something seems to me goes plop. Who said gravy? You like gravy?"

El Angel's heart bounced. "I like to be kidnapped," he said, feeling audacious and guilty and liking it. "And I like to be rescued."

"As real as a run in your stocking. And so are my eyeshades and teeth," she said. "She wiped her mouth quickly and thought with a clean handkerchief—"I'd be a good wife to a bandit."

But Andrew did not kiss her. Pedro saw that, touching him ever so gently on the shoulder when he leaned forward.

"Who do you think you are?" Andrew demanded.

"I think he's the conductor," Lily said lightly, getting up. "He's just trying to tell us we're here."

ONCE outside they found that Andrew's surmise about an abandoned mine had been correct. Nothing was left but a few buildings and a sheet metal roof from a cliff edge with a perfect hiding place for the engine that not even an airplane could spot it. El Angel was walking up and down examining the interior.

"What do you think we like his haul?" Andrew explained, and Lily said, "I think it's still a mystery."

They all rode donkeys. The rest of the trail was only a narrow ledge called

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The RIVER of SKULLS

Continuing an Adventure-Romance of the Northland by GEORGE MARSH

THE CHARACTERS AND THE PLOT

YOUNG ALAN CAMERON, his Indian trapping companion, Noel Leloup, and their magnificent dog, North, are saved from starvation on the frozen Ungava wastes when they stumble upon the permanent camp of a huge white man who says he is John McCord. Living with him is his pretty blond daughter, Heather.

Their hosts talk constantly of the mysterious River of Skulls and ask them to go outside and buy for him six dogs of the same breed as Rough. When they return to Fort George the young trappers get a warm reception. Alan's heart beats rapidly as he greets beautiful Heather, daughter of the Revillon Frères agent.

Desenne's new clerk, the dapper Arsene Seward, apparently has made no deep impression on Heather, but Cameron has no time for him nevertheless. So he is anything but cordial to James McQueen and Tom Blaide, introduced to him by Seward as provincial police seeking to learn the whereabouts of John McCord, whom they charge with the murder of his wife. A woman who says she is Mrs. Hanbury, a special agent of the

government, also seeks to learn where McCord has his camp hidden. He is a police officer, Cameron convinces him and Blaide northward, but "shakes" them and makes his way to McCord's camp with the six dogs. He is welcomed cordially by the big bear-faced man and the beautiful Heather, who makes no secret of the fact that she is overjoyed at again seeing the personable Alan.

Cameron tells of his meeting with McQueen, Blaide, and Mrs. Hanbury and their expressed suspicion of arresting McCord for wife murder. Whereupon, the accused gives Alan the true facts in the case. He says Mrs. Hanbury is his wife and that McQueen and Blaide are not police officers but former war comrades intent on learning his secret of rich gold deposits in the far northland. His unfaithful wife is in league with them.

It is from another war buddy, now dead, that John McCord learned of the precious metal still hidden along the River of Skulls. He plans with Cameron and Leloup to reach the river and get some of this gold. They may have to take Heather along, for two strong Indians already have frightened her.

CHAPTER XV

NE morning, ten days after the boys had left for the Sinking Lakes, Heather, who had been hard at work gathering a supply of berries for the winter, took her pack bag, in which she carried them, and her rifle and started for the barren above the valley. It was a keen day in late September. The floor of the forest was yellow with the leaves of birch and aspen. Each night the frost whitened the tundra moss and thickened the ice in the small ponds, but the strong running river would not yield and close until the waning of the "Freezing Moon."

Leaving the valley, for an hour she walked across the treeless tundra, gray with caribou moss, like velvet to the feet, and splashed with patches of low growing blueberries, bake-apple, moss and cranberries. But she did not stop until she came to a fold in the barren, a little valley or swale where, shielded from the wind, dwarf spruce, juniper, and deer bush gallantly battled for existence. Here the berries grew in profusion and of larger size than out on the open tundra. And here she flushed a family of willow ptarmigan already in their white plumage who slipped their tails scissily as they lifted and sailed away with a loud "kr-r-r-r!"

Heather had almost filled her bag and was seated, eating her lunch of bannock sandwiches, when her eyes caught something black moving in the low scrub hundred yards away.

"It must be—it must be a bear!" she exclaimed, reaching for her gun. Her heart pounded with excitement. She had seen bears before but never had she shot one. And here was the chance to add much needed meat and grease to their store of winter provisions.

On hands and knees she started to crawl toward the bear feeding on berries with a short rifle-shot away. She did not dare risk a shot until she had a better view of him, so worked her way cautiously through thick growths of Labrador tea, laurel, and sphagnum moss. At last, she lay where she had a clear view of the feeding animal. Sprawled in a clump of blueberries, with both paws he drew the low bushes greedily to his mouth, stripping them of their fruit.

Excited though she was, she shook with muffled laughter at the juice-smeared muzzle of the huge beast, then suddenly sobered. From his size he must be a barren-ground bear, larger than the black bear and, according to Noel, often dangerous. Suppose she missed and he charged her? He would tear her to ribbons, to lie helpless while her father waited for her return. She would have to hold true. There was no one to help her now.

With her heart beating in her throat Heather attempted to draw a bead on the black shoulder of the beast hardly 50 yards away. But her sights wavered—would not hold true. She must wait—get her nerves under control. She felt herself growing cold—cold with the fear that she would miss.

Then with an effort she calmed her jumping nerves. What would Alan—her father, think of her if they knew? Alan must never know she had been afraid. Her white teeth clamped hard as she again aimed at the feeding bear. The swaying sights on the rifle steadied. For an instant the bead of the muzzle sight held in the rear notch and she squeezed the trigger.

With a roar the bear reared on his hind legs searching for his hidden enemy then dropped, biting savagely at his side. She had missed the vital spot! She must not miss again! Then, before she could aim, the bear saw her.

Bellowing his rage, he came lunging through the low scrub at the terrified girl. She leaped to her feet and started to run. But the low bushes caught a moccasin and she fell headlong. On came the wounded beast, until but a few yards separated them. Heather, twisting around, still holding her gun,

aimed as he came and fired point-blank into his chest. Scrambling to one side, she pumped another shell into the chamber as the stricken beast crumpled in the blueberry heath.

"I've got him! I've got him!" she cried, weak from excitement, as she stood with cocked rifle. Knees shaking under her she watched the hulking body sprawled in the bushes. The second shot had gone home. The bear was shot through the heart.

Trembling from fright and strain of the last few moments, she gazed in awe at the great yellow tusks from which the berry-smeared lips were littered in a snarl.

"Lucky Heather!" she gasped. "Too close for comfort, that one! I thought I was a goner! But I'm a bear hunter now! Wait 'till Alan hears of this. He won't tease me any more when he hears this story! I'm a bear hunter, now!"

It was freezing, every night, and the meat would not spoil. Her father could get it in the morning. So the happy girl went to her bag of berries and continued to pick. She had stopped for a moment at a dense patch of blueberries and was eating when the slight breeze carried a sound to her ears that straightened her where she sat, every muscle tense as wire. Again came the sound, louder now. It was men's voices!

Searching along the rim of the valley where it sloped from the barren, she saw nothing; she crawled to some ground juniper and edged in under its spreading branches. Soon the sound came again to her ears.

"Who can it be?" she said aloud. "McQueen or those Indians? And they're coming from the direction of the camp!"

Watching both shoulders of the narrow valley, at last she saw two men, carrying guns. They were walking along the rim of the swale, talking excitedly. She wondered if they had heard her shots—or they could see her. Nearer and nearer, they came until, hardly a stone's throw distant on the lip of the valley, above her, they stopped. Her heart faltered. Suppose they should see the dead bear.

For a space a thick-set white man with a beard argued heatedly with his companion, an Indian.

"The man Rough mauled, that night!" she thought, trembling where she lay,

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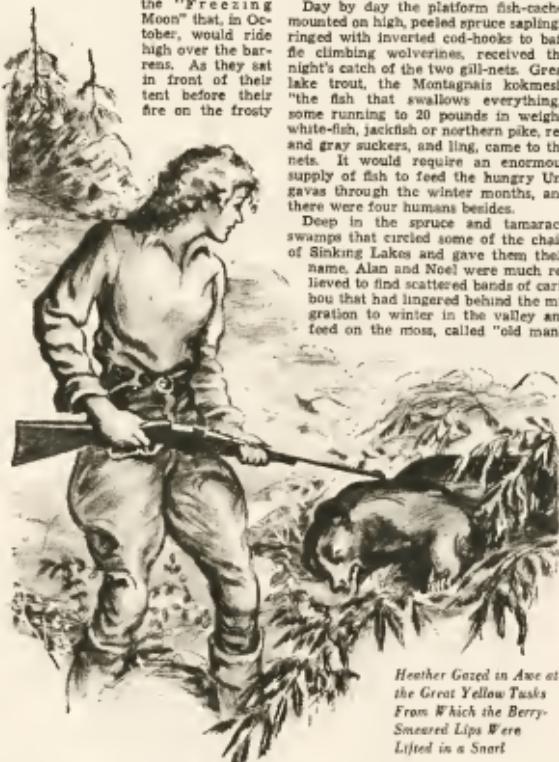
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hugging the moss beneath the thick juniper. "But who is the other? What's a white man doing here on the Talking? Can it be McQueen's found his way back to the forks?"

But the men noticed nothing so engrossed were they in their talk. Shortly they moved on, while the agitated girl lay for a long time after they had disappeared from sight. Then she made her way back home over the barren.

REACHING the Sinking Lakes Alan and Noel worked to the limit of their strength against the coming of the "Freezing Moon" that, in October, would ride high over the barrens. As they sat in front of their tent before their fire on the frosty



Heather Gazed in Awe at the Great Yellow Tasks From Which the Berry-Smeared Lips Were Lifted in a Snarl

evenings, with the dogs lying around them, they made plans for the search for a water way to the Koksoak when the large lakes froze and the snow packed hard for sledding.

"Our finding this River of Skulls is just a question of meat and fish, Noel, if the Indians leave us alone," said Alan. The Montagnais shook his head, doubtfully.

"We're going to have a lot of pemmican, flour, and beans in that emergency cache at the head of the river. Pemmican keeps all summer and we'll make plenty, for there are deer wintering in this valley."

"Shh! Listen!"

The two men sat with straining ears. Presently, far above them in the frosty air they heard the faint, clarinet-like, marching chorus of a flock of whistling swan. High up under the stars, that shone blue behind the pearly banners of the aurora that writhed across the heavens, they passed like ghosts on their long pilgrimage to southern waters.

"Guess that's about the last of those boys, this year," said Alan. "Straight from Badin Land, I'll bet! Well, Noel, my lad, the long snow'll soon be with us, and then—the big jump off!"

Day by day the platform fish-cache, mounted on high peeled spruce saplings, ringed with inverted cod-hooks to bait climbing wolverines, received the night's catch of the two gill-nets. Great lake trout, the Montagnais kokmesh, "the fish that swallows everything," some running to 20 pounds in weight, white-fish, jackfish or northern pike, red and gray suckers, and ling, came to the nets. It would require an enormous supply of fish to feed the hungry Ungavas through the winter months, and there were four humans besides.

Deep in the spruce and tamarack swamps that circled some of the chain of Sinking Lakes and gave them their name, Alan and Noel were much relieved to find scattered bands of caribou that had lingered behind the migration to winter in the valley and feed on the moss, called "old man's

"Heather the bear-hunter! But you've got to be careful. You can't take chances with those fellows. We can't afford to have that pretty face clawed up!"

She flushed suddenly, then, seemingly with an effort to calm herself, went on: "We may all be shooting something beside bear and deer, next summer," she said mysteriously.

"What d'you mean?" demanded Alan. Heather then described the two men she had seen on the barren.

"McQueen and the Indian Rough went after!" exclaimed Alan. "So McQueen, after all, reached the forks and ran into the Montagnais!" he commented. "Sure they didn't see you, Heather, when you left the valley!"

"Yes, it was almost dark when I came down across the barren."

"By gar, I don't see how dem peopl' got out of de Mad headwater so soon!" exclaimed Noel, shaking his black head.

"Well, they did!" replied Alan, "now what are we going to do about it?" "Not a thing," said John McCord. "You've got those pups to break to a tandem hitch, your trap-lines to cover, and meat to hunt until the snow's right for you to search for the headwaters. We've got to stay here with the grub. McQueen might be crazy enough to bother me this winter, try to get the map, but I doubt it. He'll wait. Our trouble will come in the spring."

"You promise that you and Heather will always keep together after this? No leaving each other! You'll always pack your guns? I wish you had Rough, but he'd leave and come back to me the minute he was loose."

Slowly the brown throat and cheeks of the girl flushed and the violet eyes winked hard. She turned her face away, then, chin cupped in brown hand.

"We'll be careful, I promise you," said John.

CHAPTER XVI

THE "Freezing Moon" had come. Each morning the boys had to break out their net buoys, for the film ice was reaching out far from the shore although the large lake on which they were camped was not as yet closed. Snowshoes, strung with caribou thongs, which, unlike moose and cow hide, shrink, when wet rather than stretch, were ready, as well as a long toboggan sled. Noel, expert hide worker, had made hooded parkas and smoke-tanned moccasins for snowshoeing, working with the strongest thread known, the split sinew from the back of a bull caribou.

So soon as the snow was deep enough for sledding, the puppies, growing like collie, were given their first lessons in tandem harness, for their short experience of the previous spring with the single fan-hitch of the Eskimos was of little value. With Rough as leader, followed in turn by Powder, Rogue, and Shot as wheel or sled dog, the big puppies were started in the school of collar, trace and trail. On the young snow of those keen October days, when the wind had the edge of a knife, it was a joy to Alan and Noel to train dogs with such spirit and power.

Rapidly the winter shut in and the

beard," that draped the dry spruce.

Before the October freeze-up closed the river and the large lake on which they were camped, the boys made a hurried visit to the McCords with a canoe load of trout and meat and the pie-bald skins of young caribou to be turned into hooded parkas and moccasins. There news awaited them.

"Boys," announced McCord as they sat down to supper, "Heather got her first bear, last week. Had a pretty close call too. She also got something else that will surprise you."

"Good for you, Heather!" exclaimed Alan, reaching and shaking her hand.

frost strengthened. Farther and farther out the ice sheet reached in the lake and, near the shore, became so thick that they raised their nets. But the big cache was now piled high with frozen fish. The "Moon of the Hoar Frost" came, when the frozen moisture in the air sparkled like myriads of diamonds in the sun, "poudre days" as the French call them, and the snow made deeper and deeper in the valleys as the "drifters" from Hudson's Straits swept over the tundra. And during this month the boys hunted far into the swamps of the upper valley to bring back caribou meat to be pounded into pemmican, and marrow from the round bones, which they stored in bags for emergency rations. Twice, when the river closed, they drove the dogs down to the cabin on the Talker to find all well with John and Heather and no news from McQueen.

And then, at last, came the Montagnais "Moon When the Snow Hangs in the Trees," and, in the middle of December, Alan and Noel started with the dogs to search for the headwater lakes of the Koksoak.

Over the barrens danking the valley of the Sinking Lakes, they traveled into the northeast. But it was a long-faced Noel who trotted behind the eager dogs over the sparkling tundra.

"No one evahr go into dis countree and come back," he reminded Alan as they stood on a high barren and gazed over the undulating white waste to the north and east, seemingly afame as the sun slanted across its limitless expanse.

"Well," said Alan, dropping his mittens slung to his neck by a thong and wiping the rime from his face with a bare hand, "some one always has to be first, eh, Rough?"

For days they traveled north of the valley of the Sinking Lakes but, in that direction, beyond the dim, blue hills they had often seen from the valley, they found no water courses flowing north, no headwater lakes.

One morning they headed into the southeast. In the sparsely wooded valleys, snow-white arctic hares, their long ears tipped with black, jumped from willow thicket to race away at the coming of the dog-team. Once, at a distance, three curious white foxes danced grotesquely on the snow, inspecting the approach of the team, until the excited dogs, getting their scent, set up a frenzied yelping which drove them away over the tundra, like wisps of white smoke.

Because of the wood, the boys had stopped in a small valley, where a stream headed to boll their kettle. After eating, they continued south and came out of the fold in the hills to higher country. As Alan, who was leading the team, reached the lip of the valley and looked far into the east, he raised his hands with a shout.

"Noel!" he cried. "Look at that lake over there! We've found it!"

Noel joined him and the two gazed in amazement across the tundra. There, miles away to the east, beyond the low hills of the foreground, reached the level, white shell of an enormous lake, until it was lost in the haze of the distance.

"Why, it's as big as Lake Bleeville on the Great Whale, Noel!" exclaimed Alan

excitedly. "This must be one of the lakes in the old men's tales."

The Indian stood in awe gazing at the white reaches of the distant lake. Far to the north and south stretched the shimmering floor of snow and wind-scorched ice, and into the east, until it merged with the horizon.

"Est ees ver' beeg lak," he said. "Big riviere flou' out of dis."

"And that river must be a headwater of the Koksoak!" cried Alan. "We're over the Height-of-Land. The rivers all run north here! We've found it, Noel! We've found it!"

That night the boys camped on the shore of the great lake in the wind break of a stand of black spruce. While the dogs lay curled in the sleep-holes, Alan and Noel talked beside a roaring fire.

"We'll travel right around this lake until we find the outlet, Noel. Then we'll hunt to find a way to get into it with the canoes from the Sinking Lakes."

"M'bbe dis lak' not flow into de beeg riviere."

the shore. Cutting in beyond the island they found that the lake reached to the north, like the fingers on a hand, in three separate bays. And from each of these ran an outlet.

"Look, Noel," said Alan, as they stood on a low hill and followed the channels of the three streams with the binoculars. "These outlets run right into the north through a flat valley and must join, later. I tell you we're on Koksoak water. To the east the ridges all run north and south—not a break in them. We've found it, boy! We're on the Koksoak!"

The Indian nodded his head in agreement.



With Rough as Leader, the Big Puppies Were Started in the School of Collar, Trace, and Trail

"Noel, this lake is surely the headwaters of the big river, or one of its branches. It's got to be, flowing north as the river does. And we'll soon find out."

Snug in their caribou sleeping bags, the tired boys slept beside their fire. In the morning, they started along shore over the wind-brushed ice in search of the outlet. All day they traveled rapidly north until, shortly after noon, when the light died, they were at the end of the lake, but as yet had found no outlet which would lead, as they hoped, into the north and the great Koksoak. The next morning they saw what appeared to be a long island lying off

"Now we'll follow the east shore and see if this is the main discharge. Some of these lakes have two. But I'm positive no water could run to the east, from the lay of the country, it's bound to travel north."

With the boys riding the toboggan, away galloped the dogs along the eastern shore. In an hour, looking across the wide expanse of ice into the southwest they could barely see the white hills from which they had discovered the great lake. In places, the hard snow, carved by the wind, rippled away for miles like white waves; in places the ice was scoured almost clean of its snow blanket, making sledding a delight. On, up the east shore, the eager dogs took them at a gallop. But at noon the sun in the south was gradually smothered in haze. To the north banks of lead-colored clouds piled above the white hills.

"Snow comin'," announced Noel, as they stopped to give the dogs a short breathing spell.

"Sure enough!" agreed Alan. "What do you say to crossing the lake to the camp we had two nights back in that thick timber? It may be an old drifter and last for days. With the hills run-

Continued on Page 22

The CASE of the BORROWED GRAVE

"Opossum Bill" Matches Wits With a Pair of Desperate Murderers by AL W. BRENZER



EFF SHOOLER was to be buried at 10 a. m. in the Hopedale Cemetery. He was Dry Ridge Township's oldest citizen and last G. A. R. veteran. Farmers, woodchoppers, and quarrymen began to arrive in Hopedale early for the funeral. Among the first arrivals was Opossum Bill Giles, the diminutive constable of Dry Ridge Township. He drove slowly up Main Street, and parked his dingy sedan in front of Ike Keller's hardware store.

"Wonder what's eatin' at Clem Kooly?" drawled Opossum Bill, pointing at the rapidly approaching figure of Hopedale's official grave-digger.

"My-yoh if I know," answered Ike Keller. "I ain't seen Clem with sich a shuffle on, sence Ace Wolford's house was struck by lightnin'."

Clem Kooly puffed up to the little group in front of the hardware store. He flung his old felt hat down on the sidewalk, and blurted angrily:

"Enough's enough, begun begob! I'm swearin' out a warrant—a John Doe warrant—six John Doe warrants, yeah, ten of 'em!"

"Anything wrong, Clem?" inquired Opossum Bill.

"Wrong!" bellowed Clem. "Wrong! Why Jeem's master, men! Jeff Shooeler's grave is full up, an' the pine rough-box is gone. But this time them ornery Yutz boys, an' that long-legged Hank Ringel has went too blame fur. They kin hide my shovels, an' take the handle outa my pick, but gentmuns, when they go to carryin' off a rough-box an' fillin' up a grave, why by the tarnation Jupiter, I—"

"My-yoh, Clem, what d'ye aim to do?" cut in Ike Keller.

"I'm gonna hunt them young scoundrels, an' make 'em dig that grave open with tablespoons, an' fetch that rough-box back, an' then—"

"An' it's only an hour an' forty-five minutes till the funeral," Ike Keller again interrupted the irate Clem.

"A bunch o' us fellers better git at an' open up that grave," suggested Opossum Bill. "We kin deal with them cut-ups later."

There were more than enough volunteers for the task. The loose ground flew from the freshly filled grave, in 30 minutes; the shovel of Notorious Witters thudded on wood.

"Well now wouldn't that curdle the milk in yer gran'mother's spring dream?" exploded Notorious. "Why they up an' buried the rough-box in the bottom o' the grave?"

The lid was carefully cleaned off, and lines fastened to its metal loops. Then the men pulled on the lines and the lid was hoisted out of the grave.

"Now about the box," said the grave-digger, "that's a horse of another color. We'll hafta leave it be, an' lower ole Jeff's coffin right inter her where she is, 'cause it's plum' stuck in there. Ob, fer



Words Failed Kooly as He Peered Into the Grave, and His Red Face Turned

Chalky White

the—" Words failed him as he peered into the grave, and his red face turned chalky white.

Lying in the pine rough-box was the body of a man. Sash cord bound the hands and feet, and the mouth was sealed with strips of adhesive tape. The distended eyes, the purple-blotched face and neck, and the distorted position of the body, bore shocking testimony to death by slow strangulation.

Opossum Bill was the first to speak. He said: "Men, this here's no boy-trick. This here's murder. Clem, go over to Joe Kump's an' tel' telephone Sheriff White. Tell 'im somebody borreyed Jeff Shooeler's grave, an' smothered a man in it last night."

The little constable studied the twisted, discolored features of the dead man from various angles.

"Yep," he said with a sigh of conviction, "it's Bert Benner."

Other men peered at the corpse with fresh interest, and agreed with Opossum Bill as to the ill-fated victim's identity. The dead man had been a deputy game warden. "Square Bert," he had been nicknamed, because of his gift for enforcing the game laws without incurring any man's ill-will.

SHERIFF WHITE arrived, bringing with him the coroner, and County Detective Jillson.

"He was, as I believe we can prove by an autopsy, buried alive," the coroner observed. "Death was a slow and terrible thing. Only a warped brain could conceive of such a foul murder."

The gruesomeness of the fantastic crime shook the sheriff until he seemed at a loss as to how to proceed. County Detective Jillson took charge. He chewed a cigar, and glared at the increasing group of farmers and hillmen. He strode up to Opossum Bill, and said:

"If you'd kept this mob of hill billys away, Giles, we might find a clew—

tracks, or something. But they've milled around here till there's nothing left but these tombstones. You don't recall any tracks, or marks that might have been made by the murderers, do you?"

"No-no," answered the little constable gently. "Ye see we was convinced this was a trick o' Hopedale's gang o' bad boys. Never expected to uncover no murder in that grave."

"A lot of help you are," mocked Jill-

"Nother thing, Bert's gun was in its holster, fully loaded," observed the little constable mildly. "What does that mean?"

"What do you think, Sherlock?" snapped Jillson.

"Then Bert was took by surprise," answered Opossum Bill. "He musta known an' trusted the ones what tied 'im up. He never expected them to turn

Blacklog, an' up in Seven Valleys. I done some investigating, an' foun' that the deer-killin' was bein' done at night with jack-lights. So I tol' Bert about it. an' we seen the lights an' heard shots, but the deer bootleggers allus managed to keep a jump ahead of us."

"That's what Bert's errand was to Seven Valleys. He wanted to lay for the deer-killers, an' mebbe git the license number of their truck, er car, an' git 'em sewed up good an' tight, before he showed his hand. Find them deer bootleggers, Mister Jillson, an' I'll bet ye a bushel o' winter ramboos agin a wormy crabapple, that ye'll have the murderers o' Bert Benner."

Jillson's hoarse gurgle was meant for a laugh.

"Sounds like something you got out of a book, Giles," he rasped. "But I'll just bear in mind," he added, "that as the case stands now, you were the last man to see Benner alive!"

With that, County Detective Jillson hurried to his parked car and drove away.

THAT afternoon as Opossum Bill was ready to drive back to his little store in Stump Run Hollow, Jed Tabor slouched up to the little constable's sedan.

"I was up on Kilnpot yesterday evenin', locatin' a bee tree," began old Jed. "Never got home till it was plum late. Well, sir, 'Possum Billy, just 'fore I stepped outta the bushes on to Cold Springs road, a car passed by. They was four men in the car, an' I recon'ized 'em all but one."

Old Jed paused, and sent a stream of tobacco juice rainbowing over the hood of Opossum Bill's car.

"The three men what I knowed," Jed went on in a lowered voice, "was that stuck-up new game warden, Jason Byne, an' this here loud-mouthed detective Jillson, an' Bert Benner. Fourth one was a plumb stranger."

"Ye're right sur o' that, are ye, Jed?" asked the little constable.

"Jest as shore ov it as I am that this is red devil terbacer that I'm a chawin' right now!"

"Tim obliged to ye, Jed."

"Ye're entirely welcome, Poesum Bill."

OPOSSUM BILL peered over the brass rims of his spectacles, as a car stopped outside his little store. Game Warden Byne and Detective Jillson got out of the car, lit fresh cigars, pocketed their hands and came into the store. They were big, red-faced men, with high, round neckshaves, and blue serge suits.

"We been checkin' up on Benner's last day, Giles," growled Jillson. "He left a clear trail to your place. But here all trace of him ends, until he shows up in that pine box smothered under six foot o' dirt. Are you sure you told all you know? After all, Giles, you're the last known man to see him alive."

"Bert stopped here at about 3 o'clock," emphasized Opossum Bill. "He left about half-past."

"Afoot?" asked Byne.

"Nope. He druv," drawled Opossum Bill. "He was goin' up in Seven Valleys. Pulled away here at half-past three."

"Sort of finicky about the time, ain't



Opossum Bill Caught Sight of the Old Mountaineer Lying Near the Top of the Sandstout Mound

out to be his murderers. If he had, he'd 's' died with his gun in his hand."

Opossum Bill slowly took an apple from a pocket of his rusty-black alpaca coat. With his eyes fixed on a fleecy cloud, he got out his old Barlow and began peeling the apple.

"I'll find the murder trail," persisted Jillson, "and when I do, Giles, you can bet your bottom dollar that it will lead right back into your neck of the woods!"

"That," said the little constable, with a piece of apple poised on his knife, "is just what I figger too."

"Oh, you do, do you?" Jillson towered over the five-foot constable, and toothed his cigar.

"Yeah," answered Opossum Bill munching apple. "Ye see, Mister Jillson, Bert Benner stopped inter my store yesterday evenin' about 3 o'clock. He was headin' for Seven Valleys."

"Now," bristled Jillson, "we're gettin' somewhere. I thought somebody would soon talk."

"Yeah," returned Opossum Bill, "an' I only wish I had more to say. I kin say though, that somebody has bin bootleggin' deer outta the mountains for a long spell. I bin findin' hares all around

son. "Here it is, three weeks yet till hunting season opens. That means Benner wasn't ganged up on 'by a mob of law-breaking' city hunters. It means he was killed by local parties!"

"Ye don't mean—ye can't be hintin' that Bert was buried alive by—by—"

"I mean," blurted Jillson, "that Benner was the victim of a tribe of mountaineer doe peitlers!"

"This here killin' don't have no mountain earmarks stail, Mister Jillson," drawled the little constable.

"Mountain earmarks did you say?" rapped out Jillson.

"When a mountain man wants to kill an enemy or a sheep-killin' dog," answered Opossum Bill, "they's only one thing he thinks of. That's his favorite shootin' iron."

"Bash!" bawled the detective.

you Giles?" demanded Detective Jillson.

"Yeah," drawled Opossum Bill, "because it proves I wasn't the last one to see Bert alive."

"You mean," croaked Jillson, jabbing a thick finger at Opossum Bill, "that Benner was seen after he left here?"

"About dusk," returned the little constable, selecting an apple from a tub on the counter. "Bert was seen in a car with three other men, goin' up Cold Springs road. I got a purty strong hunch that car was the hearse that took poor Bert to his unexpected funeral. Find that car, an' the rest'll be easy."

"If there's any proof, yes," put in Byrne. "Who seen the car with Benner and three other men in it?"

"Jed Tabor."

Byne and Jillson exchanged chilled, steel glances.

"That old billy goat recognize anybody else in the car besides Bert Benner?" asked Jillson.

"Jed never said," lied the little constable gently.

"What's this code and bull story you told Jillson here, about you and Benner being on the track of a gang of deer bootleggers?" asked Jason Byrne. "How do you know, Giles?" he went on, "that the deer bides you found were not from deer killed by these Blackdog mountaineers?"

"In the first place, they was too many bides," answered Opossum Bill. "An' in the second place, a mountaineer never lets deer hides lay around. Houn's is hard enough to git deer-proofed, 'thout leavin' green deer hides layin' around fer 'em to chaw on, an' git the deer-runnin' fever from. Taint only agin' the law in this state fer dogs to run deer, but a deer-runnin' boun' is a festerin' sore an' a bomermination to a fox or coon hunter. An' they ain't a man er Blackdog they don't hunt one er the other. That's why a mountain man partly migh allus burns a illegal deer hide. He don't take no chances with the law er his huntin' dogs findin' it."

"We'd better beat it on up the mountain, and see what we can pump out of old Billy goat Tabor," Jillson growled.

"That's right," assented Byrne.

The two officers stalked out of the little store and got into their car. Opossum Bill watched their car out of sight. Then he hurried to his own battered sedan, and started in pursuit.

He did not follow far until he swerved from the highway, and headed up the mountaineer's. He sent his car over an old log-wagon trail. The going was rough, but it was a short-cut to Jed Tabor's cabin. Opossum Bill bopped to get there ahead of Jillson and Byrne.

"Whoa, here, Levi!" exclaimed Opossum Bill, bringing his car to a jerking stop. His eyes had caught the glint of metal in a clump of bushes near the trail. He craned his neck, and saw that it was an automobile that had attracted his attention. Upon examination, the little constable found a coupe concealed in the bushes. He recognized it immediately.

It was Bert Benner's coupe.

Opossum Bill turned his own car, and drove it back the trail a few hundred yards, until he discovered a place to conceal it. Then he hurried on foot toward Jed Tabor's cabin, about a quarter mile away.

Opossum Bill kept under cover of the thick growth of brush that hemmed in Jed Tabor's cabin. Jillson and Byrne were already there. Old Jed had a foot on the running board of the officers' car. Opossum Bill could hear the drone of their voices, but could not hear what they were saying. Suddenly Jillson's gurgling, unpeasant laugh reached Opossum Bill's ears. Then old Jed got into the car, and they drove up Cold Springs road.

Opossum Bill walked back to his car. He got one of the apples that lay scattered on the floor and rear seat, sat down on a log, got out his old Barlow, and gravely began to peel the apple. A procedure that meant the little constable's mind was occupied with a particularly knotty, and puzzling problem.

Suddenly he stiffened to alert attention. The snapping of twigs and rustling of dry leaves warned him of some one's approach. His mountain-trained ears traced the footsteps to the dead deputy's coupe. The door clanged softly shut. The starter whined, the motor sputtered, and began to purr. Gears clashed cautiously, and the coupe was backed slowly into the overgrown trail.

Opossum Bill flitted like a shadow,



through a thicket of laurel, until he was in a position to see into the coupe. Crouching in the bushes, himself unnoticed, he recognized the driver of the coupe as County Detective Jillson.

Opossum Bill's ears traced the progress of the coupe. It snarled softly, as it was eased down the steep, rough trail in low gear. Then it whined in a high pitch as it was crowded up Cold Springs road in second.

"Why Judas Kelly?" muttered the little constable. "Jillson up an' turned back the ole dug road. Why the leads back to the old Watson sawmill stand, an' ends in a pile o' sawdust bigger 'n a Adams County barn! Jillson is up to sompin' an' dad-drove if I ain't gonna find out what it is!"

Opossum Bill left the trail and cut across a shoulder of Charberlain's hill. At first he thought only of speed. As he neared his destination he became stealthy as an Indian. A muffled, metallic sound reached him. It came from the huge sawdust pile, now but 300 yards away.

A dense growth of willows, scrub oak, sumac, and spicewood cut off Opossum Bill's view of the sawdust heap. His years as a coon and opossum hunter had made him an agile climber. He was soon high enough in a beech to have a clear view of the sawdust mound.

Then he saw what was making that occasional clinking sound. Jillson and Byrne were breast-deep in the sawdust. They were facing each other, and shovel-

ing feverishly. In their haste, their shovels struck together occasionally with a dull clang.

For some seconds the little constable was so absorbed in watching the two men's strange work, that he did not notice Jed Tabor. Then he caught sight of the old mountaineer lying near the top of the sawdust mound. Old Jed was tied, hand and foot. His spike of a white chin-whisker was topped by a band of adhesive tape, forming the letter T. Opossum Bill's mustache wore its usual smile-curves, but his mild blue eyes became cold as ice cubes.

Opossum Bill knew that ice, buried in sawdust, will keep indefinitely. But instinct told him that Jillson and Byrne were not digging a pit in which to bury ice. He watched them dig down until they were out of sight.

Then the shovels were tossed out of the hole, and Byrne boosted Jillson up. The latter reached down and gave Byrne a lift. They looked sharply about, from the top of the sawdust stack, then picked up the bound and gagged mountaineer, and rolled him into the hole they had dug. They were both six-footers, and they carried their pistols. Opossum Bill was without a weapon, except for his old Barlow knife.

The two again looked in every direction, then snatched up their shovels and began to cover old Jed with sawdust. They got on opposite sides of the hole, and worked like flails. The sawdust grave was soon full. They cached their shovels, and Byrne raced to his car, while Jillson streaked for the dead deputy's coupe. They sent the cars back toward Cold Springs road as if they were fleeing before a cyclone.

Opossum Bill hit the ground running. He sped to the concealed shovels, caught one up, and set to work. He did not dig down from the top of old Jed's sawdust grave. Instead, he started digging well down one sloping side of the sawdust mound. He dug a trench. As it lengthened, it sloped upward. Thus, the little constable was working sawdust downward, and he made every sweep of the shovel tell.

The little constable thought he would never reach the buried mountaineer. His wiry arms worked like pistons. Sweat dripped from his face, dampened his clothes, and formed in great drops on the back of his bands. After what seemed to Opossum Bill like an hour, but which was scarcely five minutes, he uncovered old Jed's booted feet.

The little constable threw aside the shovel, and grasped Jed's ankles. He gave a mighty heave, and bore old Jed down the side of the sawdust mound on a miniature avalanche. He stripped the tape from the limp mountaineer's mouth, and cut away his bonds. He pumped old Jed's arms, then kneaded his chest. After a short spasm of trembling, old Jed yawned, then slowly gasped his way back to consciousness.

Opossum Bill cautioned Jed not to try to talk, while he filled up the trench he had dug into the sawdust grave. Finally satisfied that the sawdust mound looked just as Jillson and Byrne had left it, the little constable replaced the shovel where he had found it. Then he piloted

BY COMPARISON

MIN PLAYS MATCHMAKER

By Allan F. Herdman

HANK CRABB held the screen door open, and Min came toddling into the spacious farmhouse kitchen, her arms full of packages and paper bags.

"Toot yer war never comin' home," complained Min's husband, looking up at the antique walnut clock on the wall. "Ten arter twelve. I war berginnin' ter feel sort o' empty-like."

"I can't help it," said Min, laying her parcels down on the kitchen table. "I met Fidelia Bunyon just as I war leavin' ther store an' I war arskin' her what she'd charge fer makin' me er suit fer autumn if I furnished ther goods. She's over sewin' fer Armindie Mooney right now. She don't like ter work that though. Finds Armindie too bossy like ever'one does. Why didn't yer put ther teakettle over ther fire in ther range if yer so hungry? It wouldn't o' took so long ter make tea fer lunch. Didn't yer know that war crullers an' cookies inter ther crock? Why didn't yer eat one o' them ter—"

"I did eat three or four crullers, Min, but they don't satisfy yer like er regular lunch with fried pretzels."

"I guess yer not starvin'," said Min. "I didn't mean fer yer to eat ther whole crock full."

"War ther any mail ter ther post office, Min?"

"Just er special sale catalog from ther mail order comp'ny ter Chicago, an' er short letter from Emma. Her an' ol' Van Swain is comin' up from Middleville ter spend Sunday with us. I guess Van Swain goes somewhere erbout ever' week-end since he bort that thar new 8 sport coupe of hisin'."

Hank Crabb scratched his semi-bald pate thoughtfully. "Tell me somethin', Min. Has er a—has of Van Swain really got money or ain't he? He don't seem ter work at nothin', wears coats with tails, striped pants them thar gray spots over his partend leather shoes, carries er case with his 'titlist an' fam'ly crest stamped onther silver head, an'—yar, most fergot—allus er white starched vest with that thar big gold doré chain draped across it and hooked onther er dollar watch inter his pocket. Think about him—"

"Course he's got money!" interrupted Min. "Em says he's got investments inter oil stocks an' er new mouse trap comp'ny what make traps what catches ther mouse 'fore he eats ther cheese. Quite er ideaz I thort."

"Yar, funny I never thort up that invention. Great how some fellers makes money. Simple enough too. —Er a—how much do yer spos'e of Van Swain are with by now, Min?"

"Emma says he's worth at least \$25,000 'cause one night when he war callin' enter her bin' bank derposit book fell outns his pocket onther sofa inter ther parlor. Em said she quick pushed it in back of a pillow enter ther sofa as

when he had went home she looked it over."

"Did Emma know how ter figger out how much he had inter ther bank?"

"Course she did, Hank Crabb. Any one would know how ter do that. She jest took er pencil an' er piece o' paper an' added up all ther numbers in sight. Come ter most \$26,000 but Em 'lowed some off fer checks he might o' drawed ergain his ercount fer them big black cigars he smokes."

"Yar, he give me er couple onces. After that I knowed enough ter stick

"him", you sister Em can't make er bid fer er husban' on looks eralone. Now if she bad went ter college an' could discourse liter'ture an' trav'lin' in Egypt an' ther Orient an' knowed somethin' 'bout investments in oil stock an' mouse traps an' things so's they have somethin' inter common ter discourse, then Em would have er better chance with them ol' fellers. Bout all Em knows is omhroederin' an' makin' lace tattin' fer pillows an' things an' sewin' terger rag rugs. Em can't enjoy listenin' ter him talk 'bout sailin' 'round



Pulling Her Skirt
Above Her Knee,
Fidelia Showed Min
a Newly Mended Run
in Her Stocking as
Some One Coughed
Back of Her

ter my ol' corncock an' pipe terbacker—that or my plug terbacker."

"He'd make Emma er right good husband jest ther same!" defended Min.

"Yar—course—that ain't no denyin' that thar, Min. Takes him plenty long enough ter pop ther question ter Emma though. I'd thank your sister would get tiret of waitin' fer him ter say somethin'."

"Wal, what o' it?" flared Min. "I guess a man wants ter be sure, don't he? If I had it ter do over ergin I'd ter took more time 'fore I—"

"But I don't think o' Van Swain will ever arsk Emma ter marry him, Min. If be intended ter I think he would have perposed 'fore this. Looks like all he are in'trested in are this har platonic friendship sort o' er'rangement. Course if er woman are special ertractive she might win him over ter gettin' married in time, but yer see Emma ain't—er a if Em war only—"

"Are yer incineratin' Em ain't good lookin' 'ernough ter extract o'?" began Min.

"I ain't incineratin' nothin', Min. Course with all respect meant an' ever-

ther canals o' Venice inter them thar gondolas, and he don't give er whoop whether er pillow has fancy tattin' onter it or not. Yer see what I means, Min. Now if Em could only cook good an' bake good so she war better, other women by comparison, but ther yer are ergain, Em don't like cookin' an' bakin', an' ol' Van Swain likes good cookin' an' cakes an' pies an' things. I don't b'lieve he'll ever purpose ter Em."

"Better'n other women by comparison," Min repeated her husband's words aloud. "Speakin' o' comparisons, Hank Crabb, give me a idear. Mebbe what o' Van Swain needs are some strakin' comparison."

"For insterance," said Hank Crabb.

"Wal," said Min, "it come to me like flash, s'pose when Em an' Van Swain are here ter dinner Sunday, we set him down onter one side of ther table, an' right ercross ther table enter ther other side whar he can't help but take notice

of how they looks, we'll have Em set 'longside of Fidelia Bunyon."

"Oh-oh!" chuckled Hank Crabb. "I think I see what yer mean, Min. I think yer got somethin' that. Long-side of Fidelia, even Em would show up good—by comparison!"

"And I'll drop er few hints ter ol' Van Swain at ther dinner table that it's 'bout time he bort er ring fer Em. That's no sense of lettin' this har courtship drag on fer ever."

"For darned tootin'!" agreed Hank Crabb. "Thar ain't no sense in lettin' er \$25.00 husband get erway outta Em. It'll give me an' you sort of er comfortable feelin' too, ter know he's thar in case we don't have our tax money ready on time or the int'rest onter ther mortgage when it's due."

"We'll do all we can ter make him like us as! Em on Sunday. I'll even bake one of my nice graham cracker pies especial fer him. I better call up Armindie's right erway an' get Fidelia onter ther phone ter see if she can come all right."

ABOUT 11 o'clock Sunday morning, A Winston L. Van Swain, with Min's sister Em at his side drove down the Crabb farm lane and brought his shiny light blue EZ-8 coupe to a stop opposite the kitchen door. Min and Hank Crabb rushed out the kitchen and down the porch steps to greet them.

"So glad to see you both!" laughed Min, kissing Em on the nose as she stepped down from the runboard of the car to the ground. "It was so good of you to bring Em to see us again," said Min, shaking hands with Em's wealthy gentleman friend. "We always look forward to your coming, me and Hank. Somehow you seem to be just like one of the family," coyly giggled Min. "Who knows—mebbe someday you will be!" Min wasn't losing any time in getting her campaign to catch a husband for Em, under way.

"Why Min!" exclaimed Em. "What are you talking about?"

"Never you mind!" laughed Min, and smiling sweetly at Mr. Van Swain: "We have er secret, haven't we, Mr. Van Swain?"

"What's that? What's this?" said Mr. Van Swain, briskly, and appearing very uncomfortable.

"I said, 'Who knows—mebbe some-day soon—'"

"Care if I raise ther hood o' yer new car an' take er look at ther motor, Mr. Van Swain?" asked Hank Crabb, and Min looked daggers at him for his untimely interruption.

"I'll raise it for you," offered Em's gentleman friend, afraid Hank Crabb might scratch the pretty blue car enamel.

FIDELIA BUNYON arrived just in time for dinner and apologized to Min in the kitchen for being late. Pulling her pink gabardine skirt to her suit up above her knee she showed Min a neatly mended run in her silk stockings. "I had to mend it before I came, Min. It took Armindie about an hour to find the right spool of thread."

"Hrrumph!" some one coughed in

Continued on Page 21



THOUSANDS GAIN 10 TO 25 LBS. QUICK WITH NEW IRONIZED YEAST TABLETS

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BRINGING UP FATHER

By

George McManus



ROSIE'S BEAU

By George McManus



THE BUNGLE FAMILY

By
H. J. Tuthill

WHAT A BUST. AFTER ALL OUR TROUBLE WALKING TO TOWN FOR A KEY TO THIS TREASURE CHEST, WE LOST IT.

WHADDYE MEAN, WE LOST IT?

DIDN'T YOU HAVE THE KEY? AND DIDN'T YOU...

OH OH, WHO'S THIS COMING? WHAT, A PIRATE?

PLENTY HARD LOOKIN' BABY, EH?

IT'S CAPTAIN KIDD, HIS NAME IS ON THIS CHEST, AND I'VE SEEN PICTURES OF HIM.

HRRRUMPH! BY THUNDER, HERE'S THE CHEST: LOOK SHARP, SWABS! WHO TOOK IT OUT OF THE WATER?

SPEAK UP, SOMEBODY, OR BY THE LORD HARRY I'LL LET DAYLIGHT BETWEEN YOUR RIBS!

AND THIS BIG SWAB!

GET UP OFF THAT CHEST!

HOMER, GET UP, OR...

SO! MUTINY, EH?

UP!

AFTER THIS, MY HEARTY, WHEN YOU'RE SPOKE TO, YOU'LL OBEY ORDERS, OR BY THUND...

HOMER! WAIT! DON'T...

STAND BACK! ONE MORE STEP AND I'LL...

HOMER! WAIT! DON'T...

HOMER! WAIT! DON'T...

HOMER! WAIT! DON'T...

OH STOP! STOP!

HELP! HELP! POLICE!

MARK ME, I'LL HAVE THE LAW ON YOU FOR THIS!

MY WORD, BUTCH, I DON'T GET THIS. TALKING ABOUT SOMEBODY TO COURT.

RES. U.S. PAT. OFF.

YEAH, AN INVENTION

TO KICK OUT ALL KINDS OF BUGS, NUTS...

YEAH, AN INVENTION

TO KICK OUT ALL KINDS OF BUGS, NUTS...

YEAH, AN INVENTION

TO KICK OUT ALL KINDS OF BUGS, NUTS...

SHORT STORIES

By H. J. Tuthill



Poems

WESSEX

DO YOU think of me at all,
When I am gone?
Do you think of me at all,
As if I might?

Do you think of me at all
At the crook of evenfall,
Or when the sky-birds call
As they fly?

Do you look for me at times,
Wistful ones?
Do you look for me at times
Strained and still?
Do you look for me at times,
When the hour for walking comes,
On that grassy path that climbs
Up the hill?

You may hear a jump or trot,
Wistful ones.

You may hear a jump or trot—
Mine, as there—

You may hear a jump or trot
On the stair or on the plot;
But I shall cause it not,
Be not there.

Should you call as when I knew you,
Wistful ones.

Should you call as when I knew you,
Guard your home;

Should you call as when I knew you,
I shall not turn to view you;

I shall not listen to you;

Shall not come.

—THOMAS HARDY.

THERE IS AN ANSWER

SHE'S only six—but oh, how all
Her questions baffle me!
But it's been going on since—well,
I think—since she was three.

She asked: "Why can't I see God?"—as
she turned her gaze about;
Then: "Why can't we fly high—like birds?"—
And—"Are clouds hard—or softs?"

I've answered why—and where—and when—
And tried hard to be truthful;
But it's so difficult sometimes,
When waiting ears are youthful.

And now she's raised her trusting face,
And pauses in her play;
"Do storks bring babies—honesty?"—
I don't know what to say!

—LYLA MYERS.

THE TWILIGHT OF LIFE

WE HAVE loved the stars too fondly
To be fearful of the night."
We have faced life's fire too often
To be frightened from the fight.
We have seen the lightning's flashes,
We have heard the thunder's roar;
We have ridden plunging waters—
But they terrify no more.

IN THE autumn of our living
We dread not the winter's blast.
For the memories of our springtime
Shall endure until the last.
Though life be still a struggle,
A dark November day
Is fully compensated
By an hour of sunny May.

So through the days left for us
In this best of worlds we know,
Let there be no fear or clinging
When we're battered by the foe.
And when we start our journey
To our best beloved star,
May God grant us speedily sailing
When we have crossed the bar.

—NORMAN L. SCHILLER.

THE HAPPIEST HEART

WHO drives the horses of the sun
Shall lead it but a day;
Hither the foamy deer were done,
And kept the humble way.

The east will find the sword of fistic,
The dust will hide the cross;
As, now, shall man so high his aims
Toss up and tear it down.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet bower
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to Heaven the rest.

—JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

LAST LINES

NO COWARD soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-tormented
sphere;

I see Heaven's glories above,
And Earth shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!

Life—that in me has real,
As I—undying life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds,

That move men's hearts, unutterably vain;
Worthless as water'd weeds.

Or mildest frost amid the boundless main.

To waken doubt in me

Holding me fast by thine infinity;

So surely anchor'd on

The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love

The spirit animates eternal years,

Perseveres and breeds above,

Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and tears.

—EMILY BRONTE.

THE BUSY BEE

A BUMBLE-BEE in a clover field,

Was busy gathering sweets;
It hummed a plain and simple tune,
While busy with the tasks.

As the bee was flying 'mongst the blooms,

A dog came on the scene,
A vicious, mangy, lip-curdled cur,
With disposition mean.

In the business of the humble-bee,

He mixed, as the story goes,

Till the creature turned from its quest
Of sweets.

And lit on the old dog's nose.

Tis hard to tell, unless you know,
Just how a simple touch.

Upon a tender spot like that,
Can hurt so very much.

This lesson from the dog and bee,

Now seems to be complete;

Don't meddle with the business end

Of things you chance to meet.

—HARRY BROOKWELL.

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

STRANGELY, we so fail to fashion for our
unseen ends

The splendors that the furnish of this world
doth now—

Such palaces that crumble to a ruined ope,
Such garbed memories upon Earth's frail
page—

When oft the lasting glory of our life depends
Upon a little child, a stable, and a star.

—GILBERT EMERY.

NEW AND OLD
FAVORITES

FROM "SYLVIA"

WHO wants a gown
Of purple field,
Embroidered down
The seams with gold?
See here!—a Tulip richly laced
To please a royal fairy's taste!

Who wants a cap
Of crimson grand?
By great good hap
I've one on hand:
Look, sir!—a Cock's comb, flowering red,
The just the thing, sir, for your head!

Who wants a frock
Of vestal hue?
Or snowy snow?
Fair maid, do you?
O me!—a Lady'smock so white
Your bosom's self is not more bright!

Who wants to sport
A slender limb?
I've every sort
Of hose for him:
Both scarlet, striped and yellow ones.
This Woodstock makes such pantaloons!

Who wants—(hush! hush!)
A box of pines?
Twill give a bush;
Yet leave no taint:
This Rose with natural rouge is fil'd,
From its own dewy leaves danc'd.

—GEORGE DARLEY.

THE WITCH IN THE GLASS

"MY MOTHER says I must not pass
Too near that glass;
She is afraid that I will see
A little witch that looks like me,
With a red, red mouth to whisper lies
The very thing I should not know!"

"Alice, for all your mother's care!
A bird of the air,
A wistful wain, or I suppose
Sent by some impious boy a rose,
With breath too sweet, will whisper low
The very thing you should not know!"

—SARAH MORAN BRYAN PEATT.

TELLING THE BEES

BATHSHEBA came out in the sun,
Out to our walled cherry-tree;
The tears above her cheek did run,
Bathsheba standing in the sun,
Telling the bees.

My mother had that moment died;
Unknown, sped I to the trees,
And plucked Bathsheba's hand aside;
Then snatched the name that there she cried
Telling the bees.

Her look I never can forget,
I that held sobbing to her knees;
The cherry-boughs above us met;
I think I see Bathsheba yet
Telling the bees.

—LIZETTE WOODSWORTH REESE.

TO A ROSE

GO, ROSE, and in her golden hair
Ye shall forget the garden soon;
The sunshine is a captive there
And crowns her with a constant noon.
And when your spier odors goes,
And fades the beauty of your bloom,
Think what a lovely hand, O Rose,
Shall place your body in the tomb!

—FRANK D'WYER SHERMAN.

THE CASE OF THE BORROWED GRAVE

Continued from Page 13

old Jed Tabor back to his hidden sedan.

With Jed finally seated safely in the old sedan, Opossum Bill said: "I'm gonna go an' caution yer woman, Jed. They's apples there in the oaks o' the car. Eat two, three till I git back. Nothin' like chawin' on a apple to settle a body's nerves, an' put ye in gear when yer clutch gets to slippin'."

Opossum Bill returned in half an hour. "Yer missus knows ye're safe, Jed," he drawled, with a twinkle in his mild, blue eyes. "But in the mornin' she's gona a report ye missin', an' take on sompin' scandalous. An' I bet a plug o' red devil agin a busted stony that Jillson an' Byne'll go over Blacklog with a fine tooth comb huntin' fer ye."

"Yeah. They'll be combin' the mountain to make sure nobuddy git's wise to the sawdust grave they put me in, the rock-slimin' copperheads!" exploded old Jed. "They faulted me inter goin' with 'em. Said they foun' somethin' they'd clear up Bert Bensher's killin'. Said it was right back the dug road a ways. Byne stopped his car about half way back to the ole sawmill stand, an' they both got out. Jillson sez, 'Look what we foun' over here in the brush!'

"I follered 'em inter some laurel, an' before I could say Jack Robinson, them pizen, belly-crawlin' copperheads had me tied up taped up tighter 'n the ole Harry."

"Then they put me in the back o' the car, an' Jillson he lit out fer Chamberlain's hill. Byne driv on back to the

sawdust stack with me. As he driv erlong, he sez to me: 'Tomorrer mornin' in the word'll go around that you've disapeared. But ye ain't gonna be foun'. We'll take care o' that,' he sez. 'The public'll figger that ye've left the country because ye were guilty o' helpin' to murder Bensher,' he sez. 'We'll see that they's evidence to prove yer guilt,' he sez."

"The cold-blooded, pre-meditatin', murdruus buzzards!" exclaimed Opossum Bill. "Why dog my cats, Jed. It's insultin' to buzzards to call them that. They're worse'n buzzards!"

"That ain't all they said, neither, 'Possum Billy," Jed went on. "They said ye was due to disapear soon. Said Benner's killin' wasn't no one-man job, so two men was to drop outs sight to make it look right. An' them two men was to be me an' you, 'Possum Billy. They said they was plenty o' evendurance agin the both of us. An' with our disapearance, why the evendurance would just erbout convince everybody that we was the pair that done erway with pore Bert Bensher."

"Um-m," muttered Opossum Bill, bringing his sedan to a stop. "They figger they've got ye, Jed," he drawled on, "an' they got me to git. Um-m. We gotta work fast. They'll more'n likely plan for me to drop out o' sight purty near the same time the report gits out that ye're missin'. Yep. We gotta work fast. Here's what we'll do. Ye'll hide in the brush till after dark. Then slip inter the house. I'll caution Ma so's she won't give it erway that ye've been 'raised from the dead!' An' I'll call a young friend o' mine that's a trooper in the state police — Trooper Shattuck. He's a smart boy. We got ernough on Jillson an' Byne right now, to hang 'em higher'n Haaman. But we can't prove it. Mebbe with the trooper on our side, 's a sort o' watchin' that pair purty close, he'll see somethin' sooner er later that'll fix their clocks fer 'em! Yep, Jed, we gotta git outside help. An' they ain't no better help fer this kind of a job than a state cop."

IN RESPONSE to a telephone call from Opossum Bill, Trooper Shattuck and the little

FROM "THRESCORE AND TEN"

WHO reach their threescore years and ten,

At I have mine, without a sigh,
Are either more or less than men —

Not such am I.
I am not of them; life to me
Has been a strange, bewildering dream,
Wherin I knew not things that be
From things that seem.

I thought, I hoped, I knew one thing.
And had one out, when I was young —
The impulse and the power to sing.
And so I sang.

They left me here, they left me there.
Went down dark pathways, one by one —
The wise, the great, the young, the fair;
But I went on.

And I go on! And bad or good,
The old allotted years of men
I have endured as best I could.
Threescore and ten!

—RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

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constable talked late into the night in the little mountain store. Opossum Bill related all that he knew pertaining to Bert Benner's mysterious murder, and he told what had taken place at Jed Tabor's cabin on the mountain and at the old sawmill stand.

"An' so," Opossum was saying, "if them loony officers do keep their threat to git me, an' I should be caught nappin', ye'll more'n likely find what's left o' me buried in that sawdust pile. If that should happen, ye'll know who to suspect."

"If that should happen, Constable Giles," said the trooper, "I'll get the guilty persons or die in the attempt. But it will not happen. We won't let it happen. We——"

"Hands up!" The command was rasped out in the doorway of the little store. Two masked men stood outside, the muzzles of their pistols pressed against the rusty screen door. A single kerosene lamp, bracketed on a central post, threw a soft light over the store's interior, and glinted on the guns of the intruders.

Trooper Shattuck's hand streaked to his holstered pistol. Before he could complete his draw, a blast of gunfire crashed through the screen door. The trooper swayed on his legs, slowly folded to the floor, and lay in a heap.

The masked pair leaped inside, swiftly bound and gagged Opossum Bill, then one of them carried him on his shoulder to their waiting car, and dumped him into the rear. As the car sped up the mountain road, Jed Tabor hurried across the road to the store, to ascertain the cause of the shots he had heard, as he dozed on Ma Giles' "spare bed," fully dressed.

Opossum Bill was in no doubt as to the identity of his twin-like masked captors. Nor was he in any doubt as to the fate that awaited him. The little constable strained at his bonds. His struggles only seemed to tighten the knotted ropes on his wrists and ankles.

After an hour of rough going the car stopped. Opossum Bill wormed into a position to see out of the car. The dim outlines of the giant mound of sawdust towered above the car. The moon, slipping behind the black bulk of Chamberlain's hill, cast spectral shadows over the forlorn spot. The little constable's captors went unerringly to the hidden shovels, then paddled to the top of the sawdust heap, and began to dig.

Opossum Bill kept his night-hunting-trained eyes on the shadowy forms of the diggers. They sank lower as they dug. Soon they were waist-deep. Slowly the sawdust grave deepened until their heads vanished. To their watching prisoner they seemed to have melted into the eerie shadows, that hung over the spot in ever-increasing thickness, as the moon slipped lower behind

A moving shadow flitted among the still, deep shadows of the night, and

glided to the car in which Opossum Bill was held prisoner. A door of the car swung open as silently as the flapping wings of a great horned owl, which at that instant glided over the sawdust mound. A keen-edged knife was slipped cautiously under Opossum Bill's wrist bonds. There was the slight, crisp sound of a keen blade cutting rope, and Opossum Bill's wrists were free. The sound was repeated, and the ropes fell from his ankles. The little constable winced as he peeled the tape from his mouth.

Then two other shadows began to move toward the car from the top of the sawdust pile. A cold, familiar object was thrust into Opossum Bill's hand. The two approaching shadows took on the forms of men. A flashlight suddenly blazed in one of their hands. The cold, familiar object Opossum Bill found in his hand, kicked up as it barked. The flashlight was smashed out by a bullet from the little constable's old-fashioned .32-caliber revolver.

"Hold the phone!" Opossum Bill's drawl had a sharp edge to it. He added:

"You're covered like a blanketed

wrists. Opossum Bill and old Jed placed the body of Jillson in the officers' car, and closed the doors.

"Now, Jason Byne," said the little constable, "ye kin walk up to that sawdust grave ye jest helped to dig, an' jump in!"

"What are you going to do?" croaked Byne.

"We're gonna plant ye in sawdust fer safe-keepin,'" answered Opossum Bill. "Ye know the old sayin', 'he that digs a pit shall fall inter it 'imself.' Yep. We're gonna do on to ye as we tried to do to Jed, an' as ye aimed to do to me. We're gonna bury ye in that nice damp, smothery sawdust, an' stomp it down good. Ain't nothin' as的艺术 as damp sawdust when it's tramped down good. Course if ye talk, an' talk fast, we'll let ye off. Whose ideer was it to bury Bert Benner alive? An' what had ye agin him? Talk up, er git in that hole!"

"It was Doremim's idea, to, to git rid of Benner that way," blurted Byne. "He was the venison bootlegger. He is a racketeer from down around Baltimore.

He got fancy prices for all the venison he could supply to road houses and night clubs. He — he paid me and Jillson a percentage of his profits, for protection. Then when Benner got on to his racket he said he'd have to be bumped off."

"So the three of ye got the best o' Bert, an' smothered 'im in that horrored grave?" said Opossum Bill.

"I had nothin' to do with it," protested Byne. "I only drove my car, and——"

"Jed," put in the little constable, "do ye reckon ye kin reccollect all ye' ve jest heard, tomorrow, er m'bbe next week?"

"I kin never fergit it, 'Possum Bill, if I live as long as Methoosler."

"I reckon ye're a natural born witness, Jed, but ye won't needa wait till ye're old as Methoosler to testify. I got a feelin' that that'll turn out to be right speedy trial. An' now we'll be headin' fer home. I'm takin' no chances tryin' to drive this new-fangled car, an' I ain't turnin' ye loose, so ye kin drive it, Byne. We'll jest walk. Byne, ye kin start walkin'. Jed, roll 'im, an' tell 'im which way to go. An' if he tries to git erway, let 'im have it."

"Both bars, 'Possum Bill?"

"Yeah, Jed, both bars."

BACK at the little store, they found Trooper Shattuck dozing nicely under Ma Giles' care. He had an ugly crease in his scalp where the bullet had struck, that had merely knocked him out.

"Jist my luck," wailed old Jed, with a baleful stare at the shackled Byne. "The cowardly, rock-slinin' copperhead! He never tried to git erway." He patted Opossum Bill's gun. "Not one step outa the way did he take."

"Don't know as I blame him none," drawled Opossum Bill, rummaging in the apple tub. "I reckon it's better to show up down at the county seat guilty as Judas, than to show up lookin' like a dad-burned sieve!"

hose. One move outa ye, an'——"

A sly hand moved to a holstered pistol. But the move was not sly enough to fool Opossum Bill's keen, night-hunting eyes. The little constable's old .32 barked again. A heavy body pitched to the ground. To the other man Opossum Bill said: "Jest keep yer hands up. I ain't shootin' to scare. That's where yer pardner made his mistake. I had to let 'im have it straight to the heart."

"I got yer shotgun too, 'Possum Billy, an' it's loaded with buckshot," old Jed spoke for the first time since his shadowy appearance on the scene. "If I say so, I'd be proud to give the other 'n both barbs!"

"No! No! Merciful heavens no! Where'd you come from?" The hoarse, whimpering voice was Jason Byne's.

"He riz from the sawdust grave where ye buried 'im, to fight agin ye," said Opossum Bill. "An' now," he added, "ye kin put yer hands behind ye, while ties 'em."

"I kin do better 'n tie 'em, 'Possum Billy," said old Jed. "I figgered we might need 'em, so I brought erlong yer handcuffs."

When the handcuffs clicked on Byne's



THE RIVER OF SKULLS

Continued from Page 18

ning as they do, there's no outlet from this side. After the blow we'll make sure."

"Get us far across there. We have to hurry."

"But we've got the dogs to make it. Haven't we, Rough, old boy?" Alan replied confidently.

Alan went to the great dog sprawled on the wind-battered snow, and rubbed his ears as he looked into the slant eyes.

"You can take the team across this lake before that snow comes, can't you, Rough?"

Rough answered with a red laugh as his breath rose like smoke on the biting air.

With the Ungavas at a trot or a long lop and the boys riding the light sled which the dogs hardly felt, they started to cross the lake for the better camp ground on the opposite shore. For two hours the huskies steadily put the white-miles behind them. Near and nearer approached the hills of the west shore but, as they traveled, the leaden sky in the north grew more sullen and the light from the smothered sun in the southern horizon slowly died.

They stopped to rest the dogs and the sober faces of the boys, framed in the long wolf hair rime of their hoods, turned anxiously to the north.

"Eet snow soon an' grow dark-er-er dark!" said Noel with a shake of the head. "We are long piece from de shore Alan."

"We're just a couple of plain folks," groaned Alan. "We're caught on a big lake in a snow storm, maybe a drifter, and the Lord knows when we'll reach the shore."

Swiftly the December night fell on the wanderers. Fiercer and fiercer, like dust clouds, swept the whirling barrages of needle-pointed snow before the strengthening wind. On plodded the dog team into the black muck, muzzles and back coated with ice. Ahead of the dogs pushed two white wreaths of men, gasping as the wind sucked their breath from their mouths.

For an hour Noel and Alan fought on, holding their direction by constantly quarreling into the wind, as they had started, while, like sand-blasts, the edged torment of snow crystals flayed their faces buried in their hoods. Blinded by ice masking his head and eyes, white muzzle caked with blood from the shot-like scourge of fine snow, Rough followed at Alan's heels. But at length the gallant Ungavas, unable longer to face the stinging drive which tortured their noses like the lash of myriad whips, swung their backs to the white slant while they frantically pawed at their crushed muzzles to free their eyes.

Again they started, but Rough immediately swung the team down wind.

Once more Alan led off, quartering into the wind, but the dog swung away at right angles, yelping into his master's face.

"What's the matter with the dogs?" he shouted to Noel. "They won't face it! We've got to cut into the wind to reach the shore!"

Again they moved forward but had not traveled far when Alan sensed that his team was not behind him. Seizing Noel by the shoulder, with his hood close to the other's, he shouted: "The dogs! We've lost the dogs!"

Turning back the two men circled blindly, hoping against hope that the dogs with their precious food and sleeping bags were not wandering over the lake ice. In vain Alan called Rough, but the roar of the north swallowed his voice.

"Don't go too far!" he shouted into Noel's ear. "If we stay where we are, they may scent us from down wind.

the freezing man huddled beside his silent friend. Again, from the blackness beyond, above the drumming of the wind, came a faint wail.

"Goodby, Rough! Goodby!" muttered the numb Alan, already far on the way to the white sleep.

But the snow-crusted figure beside him stirred.

"Rough, de dog—de bear dem, Alan! Wake up! Wake up, Alan! De team got our scen—down win!"

Slowly Alan fought his way back from the frontiers of the freezing sleep as Noel pounded him and shouted that the team was near. At last, the two numb men drove the blood back into each other's veins, shouting together to the dogs whose faint howls reached their ears through breaks in the wind.

Then, moving down wind, Alan heard a weak, despairing wail from the impenetrable muck directly ahead. Running forward he stumbled into four white wreaths huddled behind the drifted sled.

"Roughy!"

A massive head, crusted with snow, lifted. A white muzzle, icicles hanging from frozen flews, groped for the master's face. Wiping the ice from the sealed eyes of his dog, Alan called:

"Up, boy! Marche, Rough! We're going for the shore!"

Clearing the whimpering puppies' eyes, the boys straightened the tangled harness, and beat the ice from the dogs' coats as they encouraged them. Then Alan called into Rough's ear:

"We've got to make the shore, Rough! I give up! I'm lost! You're going to lead us now! Find the shore, boy! Marche!"

With a yelp the dog straightened in his harness. Nose close to the ice the Ungava again started down wind.

"Hell tak' us up de lake—not to de shore!" shouted Noel, in protest.

"Give him his head!" was Alan's grim reply.

With a yelp the husky threw himself into his collar and started the team. On they plunged into the maelstrom of whirling snow until Rough suddenly leaped in his traces and started forward at a lop, followed by the yelping puppies.

"De spruce! I see de spruce!"

Following the dogs up over the lifted and broken shore ice, the half-drowned men stumbled through alders and on into the black spruce of the west shore. There Alan threw himself beside his dog and circling the white mane shouted: "You did it, you old devil! God bless your bones, you took us ashore! You knew the wind had shifted and we didn't!"

"Ah-bah!" cried Noel. "De win' she shif' and we follow de shif', but dat Rough he know beitair and travel down win'!"

Back into the wind-break of black spruce they plunged and with numb hands scooped out a snowhole with their shoes and started a fire with the dry



spruce kindling they carried on the sled. There, while the "drifter" from Hudson's Straits rocked the spruce tops, the men and dogs ate, then slept the dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

CHAPTER XVII

FOR three days the "drifter" pounded the barrens, driving every living thing, furred or feathered, to the sanctuary of the spruce or to snug burrows in the snow. The morning of the fourth day when the sun, flanked by two brass balls of sun-dogs or false suns, lifted above the horizon while the skies to the north and west were still a dense black, the wind had died. With the stinging air shot with glittering snow crystals, their frozen breaths trailing behind them like smoke, men and dogs started for the head of the lake. Along the shores the wind had heaped huge drifts but much of the lake ice had been scoured of snow. Camping at the head of the lake, the following day, they started over the young snow for the shoulders of the nearest hill to search for a spring water route from the Sinking Lakes.

Here in the timber the boys broke trail on snowshoes ahead of the team for there was three feet of new snow and, without firm footing, the dogs wallowed to their shoulders. Everywhere, the night before, the wild creatures had traveled in search of food after the storm. Mice and lemmings, leaving their burrows, had mapped the snow with their tiny trails. The tracks of arctic hare and ptarmigan, followed by the footprints of the white foxes bunting them, tantalized the noses of the dogs. In places signs on the snow marked where those white assassins of the air, snowy owl and gyrfalcon, had catapulted, like stones from a sling, upon some unsuspecting hare or ptarmigan. A wolverine had loped through the scrub, sinking deeply at every stride, leaving a furrowed trail, while, farther on, the large feet of a lynx had supported him, like snowshoes, as he trotted on the trail of a fleeing fox. Canada jays croaked greetings from the naked limbs of aspens and balsam poplar, and friendly, black-capped chickadees, gallant little souls who defied the withering cold, hailed the travelers with liquid gurgles and chuckling notes.

At last Alan discovered a water route to the big lake, by way of a chain of ponds lying on the Height-of-Land. The object of their exploring trip was accomplished.

The Montagnais' "Great Moon" of January with its searing winds and nights when the lake ice split with the boom of muffled artillery and the spruce snapped under the contraction of the frost, rode over the barrens, followed by the "Moon of the Eagle." Night after night the aurora lit the white tundra and streamers of pearly mist writhed across the heavens beneath stars that shone through with a spectral blue. "The Spirits of the Dead at Play," the Eskimos call the dancing lights of the polar heavens.

Often fearful for the safety of the man and girl wintering on the Talking, Alan and Noel rode the iced river trail

behind their galloping dogs. But these were happy days for the girl who drove the yelping team, singing at the top of her lungs, while her frozen breath whitened the rim of her hood and her eyes, blue as the ice-sheets of the Straits, flashed from cheeks flaming with color.

More than once during the winter, John had crossed strange snowshoe trails. Some were the bear-paw prints of the Montagnais and some the long shape of the coast Cree. The cabin on the Talking was being watched, McCord was biding his time—waiting to follow the canoe that would start in the spring.

With May the high barrens began to wake from their winter's sleep. Shoulders of tundra thrust through their white blankets to expose lilac-green pastures of caribou moss. Snow bunting and Lapland longspur nested beside streams still sealed with ice. Daily the sun flashed from white battalions of wavies and swans bound for the ponds of Baffin Land; wedges of Canadas again followed the airways of the sky. In the thickets of the valley of the Talking, where the snow was making its last stand, white-crowned and white-throated sparrows sang. In the aspen and red river willows, where the buds were swelling, flashed olive-backed and Magnolia warblers.

Riding the brown snow water, after the ice left the Talking, came Alan and Noel in the canoes they had taken to the Sinking Lakes on the sled. When John and Heather returned from the barren with bags filled with cranberries, they planned their start.

"It will be June before the ice leaves the big lake," said Alan, but we can take our stuff in the two canoes to the head of it and be ready to start when it does."

"Yes," agreed McCord, "we've got no time to lose."

On the last day, as they sealed doors and windows of the cabin against the sure attacks of bear and wolverine, Heather turned wistfully to Alan: "Remember, Alan, that day last winter when I came back to find you and Noel with Dad?"

"Do I remember?" he laughed. "Your eyes were like saucers and your mouth opened like that." He indicated the extent of the opening with hands held wide apart. "You wondered what kind of animals had drifted in out of the bush."

"I know now," she said, "that two good friends drifted in."

Alan gazed curiously in the girl's sober face. "Brace up, Heather!" he said, with a laugh. "Just think, girl, what a great time we're going to have!"

"Do you think, Alan, we're ever coming back?" she asked. "I've dreamed such terrible things, this winter. McCord will surely ambush us when we start back with the gold—if we find it."

She looked so hopeless, so unutterably sad, that he instinctively covered her two brown hands with his own.

"Heather, you've been a brave girl. You've got a stout heart under that woolen shirt or you wouldn't be here, now. Just change that long face. I want to see you smile. Show me those dimples and those white teeth of yours!"

But as she turned and left them, Noel's quick glance caught the look in her face

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and the swift winking eye she had hidden from Alan.

CHAPTER XVIII

ITS honey-combed ice flooded with pools of water, and entirely open in wide areas, from which rose clouds of vapor, the great lake reached, under the June sun, to the hills dim on the eastern horizon. For days the big Peterboro had waited while three men and a girl watched its frozen shell soften and break up. Already red-throated loons skittered and dived, calling in shrill, staccato shrieks or again wailing like a child, from the open water, while querulous *Glaucus gularis*, Arctic tern and ravens circled high in the air, impatient for the opening of the lake.

"A few more days and we'll be able to start for the cache at the outlet," observed Alan, as he and McCord removed the gray kokomos and silvery white-fish from their gill-net and returned to the hungry dogs who stood, breast-deep, in the icy water clamoring to be fed.

"Probably the ice at the foot of the lake is out by now," replied McCord, "and a good south wind will start these big rafts up here. I wonder how close behind us McCueen is."

"Not far, I'll bet. But he'll never get the two Conjuror River Indians to go down the river with him. We'll only have four to handle when the time comes. What are we going to do—let him dog us clear to the River of Skulls or—?"

"What d'you say?" interrupted the big man in the other end of the canoe.

"I say I don't want to slave all summer and then fight for our dust. I'd rather fight now!" Suddenly Alan's gray eyes softened, as he added: "But then, there's Heather."

"Yes, there's Heather. Their game is to trail us, then wipe us out to get that gold, and what would become of her?"

"I've been thinking of her. I didn't want her to come. Now she's with us, I've turned Indian."

"You mean?" The bold eyes glittered beneath the livid scar on McCord's forehead.

"I mean when I think of Heather in their hands, I forget all law. It's a finish fight, John, and no quarter. They're going to make it, their lives or ours!"

McCord's big knuckled hands closed convulsively on his paddle. "A finish fight and no quarter, partner!" he repeated, huskily. "All law's off on the Koksoak! I know McCueen. He'd wipe us out without a qualm. Then they'd murder Heather, later, before they reached the coast—leave no witnesses, no evidence against them. And they'd have our gold."

"There's another thing, John—the Naskapl. Drummond got by without meeting them. But we're bound to run into them somewhere on the Koksoak. We're passing through their country. We'll need luck when we do."

The giant nodded. "Let's hope that

McCueen meets up with them first."

At last the south wind and the high June sun cleared the lake of its rotting raft-ice and the big Peterboro, in which they were to make the voyage, reached the hidden cache at the outlet. There the precious bags of flour, beans, and pemmican which they were to leave with the extra canoe, were wrapped in tarpaulin and stored on the high platform. While the freshet water following the ice thundered down the three outlets into the flat valley to the north, the supplies for the summer were carefully overhauled and packed in bags. Spruce setting poles were cut and shed with iron McCord had brought from Rupert. Every ounce of superfluous equipment was stored on the cache, for they could not guess what long portages awaited them on this unknown river that flowed hundreds of miles north to the sea; what churning white-waters, around which they would have to pack canoe and supplies. Only the Naskapl

For an hour, while Rough and the puppies ran snowshoe rabbits in the scrub below them, the two men watched the unripled miles of water reaching to the south, broken only by the antics of red-throated loons. Later a wedge-shaped ripple, like an ever widening spear-head, thrust out from the wooded shore toward a large island. Two canoes, on a voyage of discovery, were making the crossing. With their heads wound with netting and sitting in the smoke of the smudge, the boys fought the vicious thrusts of the mosquitoes as they watched the lake. At last miles to the south, Alan's glasses picked up something: "interest."

"What you see?" demanded Noel.

He handed the binoculars to Noel and waited for the Indian's verdict.

"Ah-hah!" grunted Noel. "Camp smoke!"

"Smoke hanging over that spruce point all right but whose smoke? McCueen's or the Naskapl's?"

"De Naskapl hunt deer on de barren. Dat es McCueen."

Back at camp McCord listened to the news.

"Right on our heels, like wolves after deer, eh! Well, they won't find much deer in us!"

But Heather sat gazing into the fire, her brown face grave with foreboding. Noel, too, was silent as he worked on a paddle with his draw-knife, for the tales he had heard since childhood of the spirit-haunted rivers and the fierce nomads who roamed the interior following the caribou herds harassed him.

Shortly after daylight, the Peterboro slid into the slant of the first drop of the outlet on its long voyage north. Past shores rimmed with red willows and alders, behind which the young leaves of the aspen shivered in the breeze, apple-green against the olive of the spruce, they rode the strong water. Farther on, past bold, boulder-strewn shores and through lake expansions, they traveled beyond the sunset and unto the afterglow.

In the morning, when they raised their net, Alan took from among the red-bellied square-tails and the white-fish, a graceful, dark-backed, silvery fish and held it up for John's inspection.

"It must be a wimmin! No sea salmon can get up here above all these falls and it's too early, anyway. We don't have these fellows on the coast—only the Hearne's salmon, with red spots, in the Bay. This proves we're on Koksoak water."

"Land-locked salmon, boy! I've caught them often in Quebec! Notice that line of black spots along the side! By glory, I'm going to have some fun, nights on this river, for I've got a rod and some flies—flies, lady! My Scotch blood wouldn't let me come without them."

To Alan's amusement McCord produced from a stout skin case, a jointed steel rod, a reel with oiled silk line and a small leader and fly-book.

Good river men though they were, the



another sound. It was a baby's cry, lusty, outraged, insistent.

"Panchito!"

Overcome with curiosity Lily and Andrew followed their captor into the hut. A hastily lighted candle disclosed a room with furniture as bizarre and sumptuous as El Angel's own trappings, but the bandit strode through it in haste and led them to smaller room where a bulging hammock swung from the ceiling. A fringe of toes and fingers waved in protest from its edge. The yelling became more eloquent.

El Angel flung his sombrero in a corner, rushed to the hammock and lifted out the infant whose crying stopped at once on a high note. "Ah, que sino," cried the bandit hugging the baby against the silver embroidery of his jacket, showering kisses on the top of its head. Then he frowned.

"Lola!"

There was no answer.

"Dios mio! My wife has left me." The bandit turned to Andrew. "Women are the devil."

Andrew murmured condolences but the Mexican cut him off impatiently. "It's not my wife I'm worrying about, but Panchito. He's starving!"

"I think," offered Lily, "I'd better go out to the kitchen and see what I can find."

"There's a pot of beans on a charcoal grate out here," she reported presently, "but they're cold and the fire's out. Anyhow I wouldn't feed them to him. Ask him if they have a cow."

"No cow," Andrew replied. "He says they had one once but nobody could milk her, so they had a barbecue."

"That's a help. Wait, let me look at these supplies. Grouche's bringing in from the diner. Anchovy paste, head of lettuce, tomato ketchup, coffee—not a thing for a baby, Mr. Angel. Why didn't you steal a can of milk?"

El Angel looked at her helplessly. Gone was his swagger, his assurance, his swashbuckling bluster. He was no knave now, merely a worried father pacing the floor with a screaming baby.

"Here, give him to me," Lily said and El Angel handed him over with relief. "Hello, little bandit! It's awful to hear on a diet, isn't it?"

ANDREW'S heart turned over with sharp, sweet pain at the look of glory on the girl's face but Panchito did not share his emotion and only cried the harder.

"Hey, there, you little outlaw," cautioned Lily, shifting his position. "You're going to spit something in a minute if you don't stop. We can't think in all this racket. Andrew, ask the man for Pete's sake if he can't think of something on the place that gives milk. Didn't the mother have an understudy?"

"No animals on the place but turkeys, he says."

"Well, we'll have to milk a turkey then. Don't tell me you can't milk!"

"Oh, yes, I can milk all right. Cows. But—"

Afterward, thinking back

over the three fantastic days that followed, Andrew remembered them with a cramp in the fingers of his right hand. For once Panchito had a good meal under his belt there was no satisfying him, and the one thing El Angel would not stand was to hear his baby cry. His train and his son, those two things El Angel loved with extravagance and adoration. The first cheer from the hammock and El Angel would call,

"Senor! Senor!"

And whether it happened to be noon or midnight or 4:30 of a chilly morning Andrew must haul out and milk Pepita. If he could not find Pepita, he milked Inez. If Inez grew stubborn, there always remained Alicia. There was no getting out of it. Panchito must be fed.

But there were other things Andrew remembered too. The happiness Lily could not keep out of her voice as she sang and clattered about in the smoky kitchen, experimenting with Mexican pots and pans. Once she said,

"I wish you'd tell the boss next time he goes off on a raid to bring me a plain old-fashioned skillet and a can-opener if he expects me to cook for him."

But she cooked, nevertheless, with madcap good will, if not always with success, and their meals were hilarious. Even Pedro smiled sometimes. That is, he smiled at Lily and there was idolatry in his eyes. But he treated her with respect. El Angel treated her with respect. And Andrew, battling within himself, treated her with respect too.

Only Panchito had his way with her. He held out golden-brown dimpled arms to her when he felt like it. He wept when she left the room. He snuggled against her breast and allowed her to sing him to sleep.

But with the return of Ysidro, all of this had to end. They had almost forgotten Ysidro. And when he rode wearily into camp on the evening of the third day with a note and a little canvas bag of money for El Angel, they welcomed him a little coolly. They had not expected him so soon.

El Angel took the money, read the note and tossed it to Andrew.

"Esteemed Senor," Evelyn had written

in her precise hand. "I am sending the 15,000 pesos (\$15,000) for the safe return of my fiance, Mr. Andrew Craig. Please release him at once. I regret that it is impossible for me to raise the sum for the young lady."

THERE was more, but the lines blurred before Andrew's eyes and he crushed the paper in his fist and threw it to the floor.

"By gosh!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know anybody in the world could be so deliberately cruel." And without even looking at Lily he went outside.

El Angel shrugged. "I was not going to let her go anyway," he said to no one in particular. "Panchito needs her." Then he turned to Lily and asked her humbly, in pantomime, if she would mind giving Ysidro some supper.

"I might as well," she said drily. "Come on Paul Revere. I'll warn over the beams."

Outside the moonlight was the same as it had been on the other nights. There came into the stillness of the canyon two muffled shots from the direction of the house. Lily screamed. Andrew wasted no time but ran at once, pushing the door open with hands gone to ice.

"Lily! Lily! Where are you?"

He found them all in the kitchen. Pedro lying in a smear of blood on the floor, El Angel covering Ysidro with a gun, Lily withdrawn into a corner of the room.

"What happened?"

"These two swine," muttered El Angel angrily, "fighting over the senorita! Here, take this gun. Hold it in Ysidro's face while I look at Pedro's wounds."

El Angel kneeled on the floor, began to examine Pedro.

"Ask the senorita if she will be so good as to get some clean rags and a bowl of water. Gracias! And you, Ysidro," he went on in quiet fury, "you always cause trouble. For three days we live in peace here, and then you arrive and there is a fight. You are always in trouble over a woman. Dios mio! Men are the devil!"

He began binding up Pedro's wounds expertly. "I can't have my men shooting each other up, especially you two. You are my best men. There is but one solution. She will have to marry one or the other of you. Myself, I am through with marriage. Besides, Lois might come back. Senor Craig, please explain to her. She will have to make a choice."

Andrew interpreted for her with reluctance, and she looked with revulsion first at Pedro, groaning on the floor, then at Ysidro, svelte, smug, reptilian.

"Pardon a suggestion," said Andrew quietly, "but I am the young lady's countryman, you know. Does it not seem more logical to you that she should marry me?"

"But, señor, you forget! You are leaving tomorrow."

"I prefer to stay."

"Bien! It is all settled then," exclaimed El Angel. "You will



flow of books, magazines, candy, bottles of orange juice, even a gallon of ice cream.

The corridor outside Karen's cell was filled with flowers. Some of them Karen asked the matron to send on over to Bellevue Hospital. Telegrams, telephone calls deluged the place until the deputies and turnkey were beside themselves. Jail routine came to an abrupt and complete stop.

As for the girls on Karen's corridor, they were having the time of their lives. Thelma and Blanche, who with Violet completed the roster of Karen's cell-mates, were standoffs at first, but they capitulated completely after Karen shared with them the delicious chicken dinner.

They openly worshipped at Karen's feet. To them she was the most glamorous, wonderful person they had ever known, like something out of a story book.

"Gee, you've only been here 24 hours, and it seems like a month to me!" Blanche remarked the next afternoon, her mouth full of crab meat salad.

Karen still wore the blue-checked gingham, but her slender legs were in silk hose, and she had on her own brown leather pumps.

"I've never had so much company in my life since you've got here," Blanche went on. "Just today three different guys have been up here to see me."

"Who were they?"

"Darned if I know. They just came to see me. Said they were interested in my case. And I explained everything to them."

"Did they ask about me too?"

Karen suddenly was suspicious.

"Sure! Everybody asks about you. But I told them I wouldn't tell them anything, just as you told me too. They said they understood you were not being nice to us, and I said you were the best cellmate anybody ever had."

"What else did they ask you?"

"Nothing, only I told them all the swell things we'd had to eat, and that your step-ins cost \$20."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" Karen was torn between laughter and tears. She had visions of what he result would be. "Eat the rest of that salad, Blanche." Karen said kindly. She couldn't scold such an adoring friend.

Violet, sensing something was wrong, questioned Karen.

"It's nothing, Violet, really. I'm just trying to get my courage up, for my lawyer will be along any time now, and my father will dock tomorrow morning."

"You'll catch it."

"That's a mild statement," Karen shrugged.

Restless, Karen paced about the small corridor before her cell. She was not sorry, no indeed. But she could not forget, awaking in the late night and hearing the sound of many people breathing heavily, asleep, locked up in the dark.

There was something terrible about it. She shuddered. All this seemed so futile. Here was Violet, and Thelma, and Blanche, victims of circumstances. It seemed that the world ought to manage things better!

So it was with a heavy heart she went to meet Lawton. Farrington was not with him.

"He'll come later," he said in reply to her inquiring glance. "That is, if you're not out of here by night. You will be if I have anything to say about it."

"What about Mother?" Karen tried to hide her uneasiness.

Lawton saw his advantage and pulled a long face. "She's under a doctor's care."

"Really? Oh, Jim, what's wrong?"

"You should ask."

"You mean all this has so upset her?"

"What did you expect? Then, too, she's been frantic with all the canceling of contracts and everything. She feels it is unfair to deprive all the peo-

"I think he feels everybody has been making a mess of the whole thing," and Lawton unfolded the afternoon paper. "I don't mean to criticize you, Karen. But this is pretty bad. I don't know what your mother will say."

Karen looked. There was the story of the \$30 step-ins, the fried chicken. Glaring headlines, Karen in bathing suit, Karen playing tennis, and finally Karen handing over her engagement ring to the property keeper in jail.

"Is it true?"

"Which?" Karen refused to allow Lawton to see her agitation.

Lawton paced about the little office of the matron. "What am I going to tell Judge Stoddard?"

"What do you mean? Did he send you here?"

"He sent for me, called me at my office. I came down to Mott Street to see him, and he told me he'd let you out if you wished."

"In other words, if I cry, 'I give up,' he'll be satisfied?"

"He means nothing, of the sort. Why put this on a personal basis? Like all of us, he is sick of all this publicity."

Karen laughed: "So the handsome judge can't 'take it' now that things are getting a little uncomfortable. You go back to him and take him a message from me. Tell him that he sentenced me to five days, and five days I am going to serve. And you might also tell him that some day I'm going to get even with him for all this, if it's the last thing I ever do."

Lawton shrugged his shoulders. He washed his hands of the whole thing. "I'll meet your father in the morning. Do you want him to come down here to see you?"

"Certainly not. Probably he wouldn't anyway! But if you hear anything of Jay, let me know. I get worried about him. Wish he wouldn't drink so much."

Lawton's face was a blank.

"He's a darling really, Jim. He's the best brother anybody ever had. You don't know him as I do."

Just as Lawton was ready to leave, Ping arrived with books and magazines and a decidedly worried expression. "I really shouldn't be here," he said. "Karen, get your hat, we're leaving."

"She won't go," Lawton explained lamely.

"Listen, Karen, we've all been working on Stoddard, and now when we've finally got him in the mood to let you out, what do you do?"

"I just say I want nothing of that Stoddard person, and I stay right here."

"You're a nice one. You leave me to cope with not only my own mother, but yours as well. In some queer way, they both hold me responsible for this. They claim because I know Stoddard I should get you out."

"Don't worry, Ping. When this is over, you and I will tell them all where to head in and we'll elect to Chancery or something."

"Now, Karen, I've told you before I



ple who were depending on your party for jobs."

"Then go ahead and have the party without me."

"You're talking like a child."

"I told you before we'd have it Tuesday when I get out."

"It is already canceled, Karen."

Karen hesitated. "Is Jay angry at me?"

"We haven't seen him. I was hoping you'd heard from him. That's one reason I came. Your mother is pretty worried about him too!"

"He's just A. W. O. L. again?"

"I guess that's what you'd call it."

"What a family I have! Jay's missing. Marie's divorcing her husband, I'm in jail. Mother's ill and Dad on the Normandie just about to have appendectomy, poor darling. You'll meet him tomorrow morning?"

"Karen, you've caused everybody enough trouble. I can get you out tonight. I just came from Judge Stoddard. He said it was all right with him if it was with you."

"What did he mean by that? Have I got to apologize to him?"

